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THE

MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

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WHAT TO BELIEVE

THE TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF MODERN CHURCHMEN

By the Editor

THE twenty-third Annual Conference of Modern Churchmen held at Oxford (Somerville College and Oxford University Union) August 17th—22nd, 1936, took as its theme 'What to Believe.' The following fourteen papers, published in full in this issue of the *Modern Churchman*, were read before the Conference and discussed by it:

The Rights of Reason in Religion. The Very Reverend W. R. Matthews, D.D., K.C.V.O.

From Fact to Faith. The Rev. G. L. H. Harvey, M.A.

What to Believe about Man. The Rev. J. C. Hardwick, M.A., B.Sc.

What to Believe about God. The Rev. T. F. Royds, M.A., B.D.

The Historic Jesus. The Rev. J. R. C. Webb, B.D.

The Significance of Jesus for Faith. The Rev. R. D. Richardson, M.A., B.Litt.

The Spirit of God. The Rev. M. T. Dunlop, M.A.

The Church in which we Believe. The Rev. H. P. Kingdon, M.A., Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford.

The Bible. The Rev. A. C. Bouquet, D.D.

Sin and Forgiveness. The Rev. Roy McKay, M.A.

Prayer. The Very Reverend W. R. Inge, D.D., F.B.A., K.C.V.O.

Immortality. The Rev. G. F. Woods, M.A.

Why Formulate our Beliefs? The Rev. Gamaliel Milner, M.A.

How to Believe. The Rev. H. D. A. Major, D.D., F.S.A.

The Conference theme, 'What to Believe,' had of necessity to be very much circumscribed, and as a consequence only certain problems of Christian Faith could be treated in its transactions. The readers of the Conference papers were compelled to move within the circle of Christian ideas and ideals, and without being technical on the one hand or merely superficial on the other, to speak in a plain way to educated people, but not to theologians or to philosophers.

The Christian religion has great need to-day of competent middle-men — men who on the one hand really know what is being thought and written in the spheres of philosophical theology, Biblical studies, Church history, ethics and psychology; and on the other hand are able to present to popular audiences the essence of this new knowledge in clear and arresting fashion. The Conference papers represent such an attempt to secure the attention of the modern man. It may be asked: Who is this modern man? We would reply that he is the man who is being influenced dominantly by the ideals which are creating the future rather than by those which created the past.

Problems of belief are very simple for traditionalist Christians who believe in the infallibility of the Bible or in the infallibility of the Church or perhaps in the infallibility of both. All that is needful for them is to find out what the Bible teaches and to believe it or what the Church teaches and to believe it. But a more complete and exacting knowledge of what the Bible teaches and of what the Church teaches has created insuperable difficulties in the way of belief of this kind for the mentally-

alert and open-minded. Literary criticism and historical research have shewn convincingly that in a number of cases the Bible narratives are self-contradictory and that the statements of the Church's Doctors, Fathers and Councils are also self-contradictory. Moreover, the advances in scientific knowledge prove that in a number of cases, where these authorities do not contradict each other, they are nevertheless in error. In short, for the modern man, belief in the infallibility of Bible and Church has become an impossibility. This is not due to there being in the modern man 'an evil heart of unbelief' such as Bishop Colenso was charged with possessing, but it is due to the unceasing advance in human knowledge and its inevitable results. As a consequence, vast multitudes in the modern world have given up the Christian Faith and have abandoned the effort to practise the ideals of the Christian life, with no little loss to themselves personally and to the communities of which they are members.

The inner side of every civilization, as the inner side of every personal human life, is the religious side. When that religious side languishes and dies, the civilization itself crumbles and the individuals who share in that civilization rapidly evince signs of moral and spiritual decadence. To restore to the Christian Religion its primal power of inspiring and disciplining the personal life of individuals and of shaping the whole development and spirit of our civilization is possibly the greatest of our needs to-day. There are very many who do not recognize this: they believe that civilization stands in no need of religion and that it can be firmly based upon materialism, provided that that materialism be scientific, and that it pays the most serious attention to the economic and political needs of its people. This of course is the Communist conviction.

The Fascist estimate of religion differs from that of the Bolshevist. The dictum of Gibbon probably expresses it best: 'That all religions are for the philosopher equally false, for the populace equally true, for the magistrate equally useful' — provided such religions be sufficiently servile. Both Fascist and Communist regard religion as an opiate. For the Communist it is, however, a deleterious opiate: for the Fascist a useful sedative.

But the Christian religion can neither be really possessed nor effectively propagated by those who regard it as less than the supreme value in human life. Jesus said :

> Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things needful for this life shall be added unto you.

They who seek the Kingdom with the primary object of satisfying their economic and social needs, like those who practise honesty because it is the best policy, will find themselves swept from their foothold in times of crisis. The Christian religion, whether as a factor in civilization or as a factor in the personal life, must come first or nowhere. It cannot submit to being made the hireling of economists, politicians, and social reformers. It demands their loyalty and obedience. Is it possible that it can ever again secure this in human history? How is it that having once possessed this pre-eminence and loyalty in our Western World, the Christian Religion has lost it?

Some will reply it is due to the Christian Religion having been seduced and corrupted by the love of power, the love of wealth, the love of ease and safety. The charge is more than half true, but it is not all the truth. The Christian Religion has been subject to and has yielded to more subtle temptations than those which seduce the worldling. It has become enchained by traditionalism, dogmatism, obscurantism, sectarianism, ecclesiasticism and materialistic sacramentalism. None of these things are inherent in the Christian Religion, but that religion has fostered them and become dominated by them. The essence of the Christian Religion is the spirit of love, truth and freedom. And all the 'isms' specified which have secured their grip on Christianity are essentially hostile to the Christian spirit.

The Christian Religion has been corrupted, enslaved, debilitated, blinded, by the dominance of its antagonists who have become falsely identified as its friends by many sincere adherents of that Religion. It is the liberation of the Christian Religion from these things and possibly from many others which is the only way by which it can once more be enabled to exercise its right and needful influence in the life of humanity.

The best in man cries out for all that the Christian Religion can give him : the most precious values in a progressive civilization demand that Religion and no less. If mankind is essen-

tially religious and if, as we believe, the Christian Religion is the highest form of the religious spirit, the task of restoring that Religion to its rightful place is one of supreme importance.

This is the task of Christian Modernism and it is one of enormous difficulty, for the Modernist Christian is pressed hard by the secularist on the one hand and by the religious traditionalist on the other; but above all by the vast mass of his fellow human beings, engrossed in the pursuit of their daily occupations and their pleasures, who understand what the Modernist is aiming at as little as they value it.

Modernists themselves are by no means entirely free of blame for this situation. More energy, devotion, self-sacrifice and wisdom are needed if the cause to which they profess loyalty is to save our Western civilization from collapse.

As we see it, there is nothing in the constitution, character and spirit of the Church of England which forbids the Modernist endeavour; but very much in the tone and temper of that Church and of the English people, whose spiritual organ it is, to encourage this endeavour. English Churchmen are neither compelled to be bibliolators on the one hand nor ecclesiolators on the other hand. 'The Church of England,' wrote Edmund Burke, 'is a Church professing fallibility.' It is not tied and bound by the traditions of the past: it is free to follow wherever the Divine spirit of love, truth and freedom leads the way. Hence, not only are we convinced that our Western civilization is in grievous need of a vital Christian Religion, but we are equally convinced that the English nation is in need of a reformed English Church through whose effective action the Christian Religion can be restored to its rightful and needful and central place in the life of the English people both at home and beyond the seas. No policy of reform, which seeks to make an entirely fresh start, revolutionary in its methods and individualist or sectarian in its sympathies, can achieve what is needed to-day. The English Modernist believes in the continuity of Christian thought, and that Christian ideals and the Christian spirit are in need of an organized Christian fellowship if they are to be effective and permanent in human society, and not least among the English people.

REASON AND RELIGION

By the Very Reverend W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's, K.C.V.O., D.D., President of the Modern Churchmen's Union.

THE subject which our conference is to discuss this year is what we should believe, and it will perhaps be appropriate if in this preliminary address I made some remarks on the question why we should believe. What is the basis on which we ought to seek to build our creed? This is a problem which lies at the root of theology, and indeed of any constructive attempt to gain a view of the world and of life. The question may be put, what is the place of reason in religion? How far does the reason take us in the search for spiritual truth? What instrument, if any, remains to us when reason can take us no further? These are problems on which volumes could be written and would certainly provide ample material for a presidential address; but there is another question which is even more fundamental — what do we mean by 'reason'? I suspect that very often the word is used in different senses by different people, and even by the same person. The idea that religion is an ambiguous term while everyone knows what is meant by reason is not confirmed by observation.

It chanced that when I was turning over in my mind the subject of this paper I was sent a newspaper report of the annual dinner of the Rationalist Press Association. In reading the very interesting speeches which were made on that occasion I came across the statement, which I take to be official, of the aims of that society. It ran as follows:

> 'The mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions and authority.'

I suppose that we should understand some such words as 'the promotion of' at the beginning of the quotation, and I may add that the Secretary courteously informs me that the adjective 'arbitrary' is intended to qualify both 'assumptions' and 'authority.' Thus the society does not rule out all assumptions and all authority, but only those of an arbitrary character.

I should like to spend a few minutes in an examination of this statement, because it seems to me that a criticism of it may help to clear up our minds on some of the points which concern us. I do not wish to adopt a polemical tone or to attack the R.P.A., but simply to use its formula as a jumping-off place for my own reflections. I do not doubt that the R.P.A. will be delighted to be the occasion of mental activity on the part of a dean. When I read these words I was startled, because they seemed to me to sum up very concisely the attitude of mind which I should like to cultivate myself, and I suppose that which would be approved by most Modern Churchmen. Yet the R.P.A. seems, judging by the speeches at its banquet, to be opposed to Christianity and to rejoice at every sign of the waning of its influence. Are we then, if we find no fault with the R.P.A. formula, not properly to be described as Christians, are we perhaps in the wrong camp?

This doubt was, however, quickly dissipated when I asked myself a further question : how many eminent Christian teachers through the centuries would have quarrelled with the R.P.A. dictum. It is an interesting and instructive enquiry. I recommend it to the examiners in the honour school of Theology. No doubt there have been many Christians who have, in fact, been content to accept their creed on the authority of the Bible or of the Church without having any clear idea of the grounds of that authority, but I should be surprised to find that there had been many who supposed that there were no grounds and that the authority which they accepted was, in the strict sense, 'arbitrary.' Even though they could not say what the grounds were, they would be firmly convinced that there were such grounds and that they were known to someone. There have been indeed two eminent Christians who might come under the condemnation of this formula, and both of them were wont to allow their rhetorical power to outrun their discretion — Tertullian and Luther. The former indeed said '*credo quia impossible*,' and the latter, in a petulant moment, declared that we should learn philosophy as we learn the black arts in order to destroy it. I am not sure whether we should include Karl Barth in the list, because I do not understand what he means by 'revelation,' but we may at least count him as a possible candidate, because he

seems at times to represent the authority on which he builds his theology as having no relation with reason or evidence. But when we have made our list as long as possible, it is ludicrously short in comparison with the long line of Christian thinkers who have maintained that the Christian faith, though it rested in part upon authority, could be commended to the reason of men, and that the authority which it employed was such as reasonable men could be expected to recognize.

The word 'arbitrary' is of course a question-begging-term and has only a psychological interest. It tells me what the man who uses it thinks about the assumptions and authority to which he applies it, but it tells me nothing about the man who accepts those assumptions or authorities. The intelligent Romanist could easily subscribe to the formula, since he would not at all admit that the infallibility of the Pope is an arbitrary assumption made without reason, or that the utterances of the Pope, when speaking *ex-cathedra*, are irrational or haphazard. Thomas Hobbes remarked that when men call for right reason to decide a controversy, 'I find that by "right reason" they do commonly mean their own.' In the same way we might observe that when men call assumptions or authority 'arbitrary,' they do commonly mean someone else's.

There is a question which I should like to put with all respect and courtesy to the Rationalist Press Association and those who support it. It is a simple question — perhaps it will be thought by them simple-minded — but it is sincere. How far have they got in their enterprise? What progress have they made in their attempt to build up a philosophy and ethics which employ no assumptions and appeal to no authority which anyone could stigmatize as 'arbitrary'? One would not expect a completely rounded system, but perhaps it is not extravagant to hope for some interim report, some list, however meagre, of propositions on which all the Rationalists would agree. I am bound to say that I have not been able to discover what they are, save perhaps that in the immortal words of '1066 and All That,' reason is 'a Good Thing' and, on the whole, Christianity a bad thing; but even so there is no agreement on what should be meant by 'reason' in this proposition.

Two distinguished men spoke at the dinner to which I have

referred — Dr. David Forsyth and Prof. C. E. M. Joad. Dr. Forsyth is well known as the psychologist who announced recently the great truth that Christianity is the outcome of masochistic impulses and Mohammedanism of sadistic tendencies. He is in fact one of the exponents of that modern labour-saving device by which opinions which you dislike can be refuted by attributing them to unpleasant elements in the psychological make-up of those who hold them. Of course, this new discovery has great advantages in that it saves us the trouble of following arguments or examining evidence; but it has the drawback that it can be turned equally well against anyone who employs it, and the analyser may find himself analysed. In any case it is difficult to see what this kind of thing has to do with a veneration for reason, and it would be interesting to hear the views of Dr. Joad on the pretensions of psychological analysis to decide the ultimate problems of the nature of Reality. A reader of his brilliant *Outline of Philosophy* and of his exposition of his own metaphysics in *Matter, Life and Value* will have no difficulty in deciding what he would think. Platonism interpreted in the light of modern science, which I take to be a fairly accurate description of Dr. Joad's position, could have little in common with Dr. Forsyth's 'short and easy way' with the great problems.

I turned next, in my search for guidance, to the list of eminent persons who are 'Honorary Associates' of the Rationalist Press Association, who may, I suppose, be regarded as, in some sense, authorities, — though not, of course, 'arbitrary authorities.' No one, probably, could claim to have read all the works of all these distinguished men, but I have read some of them and I am unable to say what affirmation about philosophy or ethics would be accepted by all. There may be one, but certainly it does not leap to the eye. We observe, for example, the name of Mr. Bertrand Russell on the roll. Surely an astonishing name to find there, for unless he has changed his mind, he has arrived at a very definite conclusion and one which would condemn the aim of the Rationalist Press Association as chimerical. However faithfully and unreservedly we trust to reason and reject arbitrary assumptions and authority, we can never establish, he would tell us, a system of philosophy and ethics. The thinkers who aimed at constructing systems of

truth, or penetrating the riddle of the universe, or discovering the nature of the Good were on the wrong track. Philosophy cannot answer these questions. It must confine itself to the logical analysis of certain concepts which are used in science; it is to be analytical, not constructive. Another name on the list is that of Dr. Stanton Coit, to whom we owe the excellent translation of Hartmann's Ethics and a foreword in which he seems to approve in general the conclusions of that thinker. Here we have left behind the scepticism of Mr. Russell and are in the bracing atmosphere of ethical rationalism. There are absolute moral obligations, which can be known and which need no further support from religion or from any other source. This view, if it could be sustained, might indeed be the basis for some such philosophy and ethics as the R.P.A. desires, one independent of faith, but alas! in the opinion of the majority of these Associates, it cannot be sustained. We know what Mr. Russell thinks about it, and we note another philosopher on the Roll of Honour, Prof. John Dewey, author of *Quest for Certainty*, who for other reasons would gravely dissent. I do not feel quite sure how the *Quest for Certainty* of this arch-Pragmatist really ended, but I am confident that it was as far away from the Categorical Imperative as from Mount Sinai.

It would be wearisome to pursue this quest for agreement further, though it would be an instructive exercise. There is, in fact, one philosophy which has achieved a considerable vogue, at least in one part of the world, but which is hardly represented among the Honorary Associates of the R.P.A., unless it be by Professor Laski. It is Dialectical Materialism, and the associated idea that all 'ideologies' are the product of economic causes. This philosophy has one great title to fame: it is the only one in the history of thought which has included a contradiction in its very title. Of this system I will only remark that it is a mystery how those who hold it can be said to believe in the 'supremacy of reason' when they subordinate reason to the working of irrational forces.

I hope I shall not be taken as intending any disrespect to the distinguished men to whom I have referred or to the honest people who belong to the R.P.A. I have a sincere regard for them and owe them gratitude for much instruction. I have been

led to pay so much attention to them because they seem to illustrate the predicament in which we find ourselves. The modern mind is in a condition of complete confusion, and one which affects not only the surface but the depths. For we must notice that the disagreements to which I have called attention concern the foundations, the nature of reason itself, the presuppositions on which any philosophy must be built. It would be difficult to exaggerate the gravity of the situation. If we were living in some placid 'peace of the Augustans' we might contemplate the disagreements of philosophers with a tolerant smile, but unfortunately our times are pre-eminently those of crisis and change, in which it is most true that without vision the people will perish. Some vision we may be sure they will have, and it will not be a synthesis of the opinions of the eminent thinkers honoured by the R.P.A., for that does not exist and would be impossible to construct. Unless there can be put before them something more coherent and more inspiring they will concentrate their ambitions on some mechanical utopia in which the higher aspects of the human spirit are sacrificed and scorned.

The kind of argument which I am putting before you has often been used in the interests of what I hope may be called without offence 'reaction.' It is the starting point in the development of the thesis that we can find no hope and no rest save in a return to the Middle Ages. Professor Maritain, for example, has no difficulty in showing the deplorable incoherence of the modern intellectual and moral world. He proceeds to trace the trouble to its source and discovers that it began when those two Sirens, Martin Luther and Descartes, lured the mind of Europe away from the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. To me the solution seems too simple; nor does the actual condition of affairs tend to support the thesis. After all the philosophy of the great Scholastics has been expounded and defended in our time with a lucidity and acuteness which we must all admire. Maritain himself, Gilson, Sertillanges, Dr. D'Arcy and many others form a group of exponents which would do honour to any school of thought. But the result has hardly been commensurate with the genius and the diligence expended. The influence of Christianity in the world steadily wanes. We must admit, if we have the courage to face the truth, that while the Rationalists have

nothing to offer, what the Christian Churches have to offer becomes less and less acceptable to the masses of western civilization.

The conclusion which I draw from the situation is a different one. It is that the work of the Modernist Christian is most desperately needed and offers the only hope of an exit from our state of spiritual incoherence. I recognize of course that Modernists do not always agree on the methods and presuppositions which should guide them, though we are at one in believing that the truth in Christianity is eternal and that its power is unexhausted. In what I shall say I speak only for myself.

What is the real cause of the ludicrous and tragic confusion of modern rationalism? It is not, I suggest, that the modern mind has fallen into a logical error and foolishly abandoned the *philosophia perennis* whose foundations were laid by Aristotle. It is that it has cut itself off from a whole realm of experience, which would have given direction and continuity to its thinking. If I may return to the formula of the Rationalist Press with which I began, you will perhaps remember that it looked forward to the construction of a philosophy and ethics which would be 'verified by experience.' Surely a most admirable aspiration, and one with which no religious man could quarrel who remembers the saying, 'He that doeth the will shall know of the doctrine.' But does it not seem curious that this reference to experience should come only at the end? Why should not the philosophy and ethics be suggested by experience as well as verified by it? There is a truth in Maritain's contention. The Scholastic philosophy was in one respect superior to that of the modern rationalist. It took the religious experience seriously; under the category of 'revelation' it allowed that the spirit of man had been illuminated by contact with the Eternal. It was mistaken in its view of the nature of revelation and perhaps in its excessive reliance on Aristotle, but it strove to grasp the whole range of human life and experience in its synthesis.

We shall never have a constructive philosophy unless we take religious experience seriously. That does not mean that we must be prepared to accept it uncritically, any more than we should accept the experience of our senses. It does mean that we should not attempt to explain it away as having no content

of truth. It means that we should take experience as a whole and not regard one part of human experience, the simplest and lowest, as one sole criterion of reality; and I am afraid it means that we should not pay very much attention to Dr. David Forsyth.

I take it that Modernists refuse to dismiss the whole religious history of mankind as a melancholy record of illusion and error. Though they do not question the grim elements of cruelty and superstition which have entered into it in every phase, they see also that there has been progress and development. From the most childish dreams men have advanced to a noble and elevated conception of God and of His relation with men. If nowhere else, progress is true in religion. They observe further that this advance has been in part obtained by rational criticism of current conceptions, but mostly by men who spoke out of a compelling impulse, not so much what they had thought out as what they had seen. Of these persons who changed the course of religious evolution the most remarkable are the succession of Hebrew Prophets to whom, as they announced, the word of the Lord came laying upon them the necessity of utterance. Though the messages which they gave were coloured by the circumstances of their time and limited by the imperfections of their character and understanding, the Modernist cannot dismiss them as mere fanatics or suppose that their Word of God was nothing more than the surging up of their unconscious mind. To him these men seem to speak with authority—though not with arbitrary authority, for what they have to say in the name of God finds an echo in his own conscience and reason, and in something which lies deeper in the human spirit than either, in that dim consciousness of God which is the heritage of every human being.

In Jesus Christ we find the culmination of the spirit of prophecy, One who speaks with authority such as no former Prophet could claim. We see in Him one who is in many respects beyond all question unique among the sons of men. We cannot, as our liberal Protestant predecessors did, see in Him an unusually enlightened Rabbi, or a great moral teacher comparable with Socrates. We see Him rather as One who is claimed to inaugurate and bring in His own person the Kingdom of God,

who thought of Himself, in Schweitzer's phrase, as the 'spiritual ruler of mankind.'' We find Him unique too in the quality of the experience which He represents — that of unbroken consciousness of God; unique too in the effects which He has produced in the world. All this seems to us to be beyond reasonable question and to constitute a challenge to the consideration of any reasonable man.

But Modern Churchmen go further. They believe that the Church has not been mistaken in its fundamental assertions, that God, who in time past spoke by the prophets, has here spoken through His Son, that in Jesus Christ the long process of revelation reached its climax and that in Him we may see, as nowhere else, the Divine life and through Him, as through no one else, we may have access to the Father. We hold, further, that the more clearly we can see Jesus the more plainly will His claim to be both our Lord and our Brother be apparent and be felt by those who come in contact with Him. Thus we welcome every attempt to see the historical Jesus and to sift the tradition which tells us of Him. We are aware too that the terms in which the Church has spoken of Him are open to criticism. They belong to an age which has passed and they do not always speak directly to our present time. We believe that the Church is still living and still inspired by the Spirit. The interpretation of Christ and His meaning for the world did not reach its final conclusion in the fourth century or the sixteenth. The message of the gospel must be rethought in our time.

The Modern Churchman would, I imagine, agree with the Rationalist in deprecating 'arbitrary assumptions.' Free inquiry must be a farce if the conclusions are dictated beforehand, and we must repudiate, therefore, any presumption that the dogmas of the Church are beyond question or that our criticism must stop short of the traditional doctrines of orthodoxy. No intelligent person would regard them with anything but respect, when he reflects that they have summed up for many generations the meaning of the Christian experience and have been one of the means of propagating it; but no less will he be ready to consider them again and to contemplate their reformation, since they are not themselves the living reality of Christian faith but only the formulas in which it has found expression. But I be-

lieve that a modern Churchman will protest with equal vigour against arbitrary assumptions from the opposite quarter. If he refuses to have his intellect bound by the frame of orthodox theology, he also refuses to be restricted by the prejudices of a narrow rationalism. There are so-called scientific studies of Christ and of Christianity which are as much vitiated by presuppositions as those of the most hide-bound traditionalist. One who begins with the presupposition that there is no God and therefore no revelation of God, will explain away all the evidences that revelation has in fact occurred. He will dismiss them because of his arbitrary assumption. What are we to say of lives of Jesus which reduce all the remarkable features of the narratives to a dead level of commonplace and set before us a figure of no more power than that of the first man we meet in the street? Is that kind of criticism scientific? Is it based solely on the study of the evidence? It is vitiated from the start by an assumption which is contradicted by the facts of history — that He who shook the world and still shakes it was no more than an ordinary man. It may well be that no enquiry of any kind can be conducted without some assumptions. It is the part of a wise man to recognize what they are and of an honest man to tell us what they are. More dangerous than 'arbitrary' assumptions are 'tacit' assumptions, and it is much to be wished that those who approach the study of religion or of Christian origins with atheistic or agnostic presumptions would state the fact at the beginning. We should then be able, as we are in the case of an orthodox Christian writer, to know what kind of criterion of probability or credibility the author brings with him to the evidence.

It is the privilege of a President to ramble, but I fear that I have availed myself of it beyond measure. I return to the point of the necessity of the work which our Union attempts to do. A glance at the world is sufficient to show that there is no real alternative before men other than Christianity. If there is an alternative, it is a kind of materialism in which scarcely any thinker of repute really believes. It becomes more and more evident that the hope of the world lies in the Christian Church. But it becomes also more and more evident that the Christian Church, as it now exists, cannot fulfil its mission. The time is

ripe for a new Reformation, one which will be carried out in the spirit of Erasmus rather than that of Luther. We seek to know what Christ has to say to this generation and to proclaim it in the language of this generation. We desire to throw down the barriers which previous ages have erected between Christian communions, and we look forward to a time when the great Catholic Church shall embrace all who can say Jesus is my Lord and my Leader.

I am often surprised that our Union is so grievously misunderstood and that many who would be welcome among us stand aloof. There are some who stand further to the left (to use a political term) than the majority of our members, people who are on the verge of the Church, perhaps some members of the R.P.A., to whom I would make an appeal. Where else than in Christian ideals do you see hope? It is true that, in the past, the leaders of the Church have sometimes been the allies of obscurantism and have persecuted the children of light. Nevertheless, our civlization has been moulded and inspired by the Christian ideas. If they vanish may not civilization itself perish? Would it not be the action of a wise man to enquire whether a reformed and renovated Church may not still be the instrument by which we can find our way into a new age, without destruction and collapse? And there are many whose opinions are more orthodox than those of the majority of our members, but who yet are one with us in spirit. They too are men of the modern world who see the forces which are at work and realize that tradition is not enough. They too understand that the gospel must be stated so that it appeals to the reason and conscience of the modern world. Why should they hold aloof from us? We need their help in our effort to prepare the way for the Church of the future.

FROM FACT TO FAITH

By the Rev. G. L. H. Harvey, M.A., Rector and Rural Dean of Sutton Coldfield.

IN the course of a presidential address delivered early this year before the Edward Frankland Lancastrian Society, Professor H. E. Armstrong urged that the age in which we live is 'no longer prepared to live by faith but seeks the truth and truth alone. *It has faith only in verifiable fact.*' He believes that this constitutes a revolution comparable to the revolution marked by the rise of Protestantism. The Church of the Future, he thinks, remains yet to be built. It will be that Church of Natural Knowledge foreseen by Tennyson when, apostrophizing the flower in the crannied wall, he wrote :

> Little flower — but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.

Here is ample material for controversy; but it is not to my purpose to discuss in detail the points which Professor Armstrong raises. I will content myself with demurring against the conception of a faith which is a 'faith only in verifiable facts.' You may perceive a fact; you may verify an alleged fact; but you have taken a definite step forward beyond this when you seek to understand a fact, even if you go no further than to try to place it in relationship with other facts. Faith may be based on an interpretation of verifiable facts, and it may rightly be urged that, unless it is constantly tested by fact and kept in closest contact with fact, faith is in danger of degenerating into undisciplined fancy; but it is difficult to understand what is meant by a faith which is a faith only in verifiable facts. Again, even if one agrees with Tennyson that an understanding of the flower in the crannied wall is conducive to knowledge of God, that is no obvious reason why one should exclude an understanding of the cat on the wall, basking in the sun, or of the workman resting by it after the labours of the day. It is difficult to see why botany should be considered a better guide to theological knowledge than biology or psychology.

But Professor Armstrong's position is, none the less, significant. He is a distinguished representative of the world of scientific thought, and those who have come, however remotely, under the influence of the scientific movement, will incline, with him, to attach a primary importance to fact. For many, faith divorced from hard fact has become an impossibility. The appeal to fact is for them irresistible. It is over fifty years since F. J. A. Hort with acute insight pronounced, that 'alienation from fact and love of fact' was a danger to the Church of England by the side of which the spectacular ecclesiastical convulsions of the time were as nothing.[1] His warning is at least as germane to the present situation as it was to that of half a century ago.

I approach the subject of the relationship between faith and fact, not from the standpoint of the philosopher in his study, but from that of one whose work brings him into daily contact with men and women who have a right to look to him for help in winning for themselves a faith which will give their lives purpose and unity and endow them with such a *Weltanschauung* that they may know themselves to be at home in the universe of which they are a part. And most of these people are what we call, not without reason, matter-of-fact folk. We have to deal with them as they are, and, unless we start from fact, I do not see how we can start at all. This method of approach does not involve an impertinent disparagement of abstract philosophy. If we learn nothing else from the philosopher, we may at least learn the lesson of humility. It was a distinguished philosopher who, lecturing at the British Academy, prefaced his lecture with the words, 'When I reflect how much is said and written, and how little certainty is reached, on questions of philosophy, I can but doubt the wisdom of the invitation with which I have been honoured, to lecture before you to-day.'

The philosopher, no less than the man in the street, must start from fact. No philosophy can be entirely *a priori*, for every philosophy needs some datum. Plato, whose influence on Christian thought has been profound and enduring, recognized the fundamental importance of fact.[2] He sought, however, a way of

[1] *Life and Letters of F. J. A. Hort*, Vol. II, p. 290.

[2] *Vide* G. C. Field, *Studies in Philosophy*, p. 223.

escape from the world of facts as we experience it, from the world of changing things, into the world of changeless being. His road was the road of abstraction. Aristotle complained that he abstracted characteristics from the things which owned them, and then proceeded to elevate these abstractions into a world of their own, the realm of Forms, endowing them with the mystical qualities of pure being.[3] His ideal of knowledge was that of mathematics, of all sciences the most abstract. This, declares a modern philosophical theologian, 'was philosophy's catastrophic fall from pristine innocence: its original sin which infected modern philosophy also from its birth.'[4]

From the historical point of view it was well-nigh inevitable that philosophy, though necessarily starting from fact, should follow the road of abstraction. In ancient times, when philosophy had its birth, observation of facts could not proceed very far because of the lack of instruments of precision. The experimental method was little used. 'Thus,' as Professor Hobhouse has said, 'no great experiential construction was achieved to match that elaboration of the conceptual order which laid the foundations alike of mathematics, ethics and metaphysics.'[5] An outstanding characteristic of the modern scientific age is its reliance on the methods of experiment and observation. Though Aristotle stressed the importance of the observation of facts and was himself responsible for advances in exact knowledge of natural phenomena which are almost startling, and though he criticized Plato's abstract philosophy of Forms, he himself provides a striking example of the gulf which divides ancient from modern. Democritus had taught that in a vacuum heavier atoms would fall faster than lighter ones. Aristotle replied with the *a priori* argument that because in a vacuum bodies, whether heavy or light, would fall at the same rate, therefore there can be no such thing as a vacuum. It apparently did not occur to anyone to appeal to fact by making some such experiment as Galileo's famous experiment. When Galileo by dropping a ten pound and a one pound weight from the top of the Leaning Tower at Pisa demonstrated to the incredulous observers that

[3] C. E. M. Joad, *Guide to Philosophy*, p. 293.
[4] F. R. Tennant, *Philosophical Theology*, Vol. I, p. 6.
[5] L. T. Hobhouse, *Development and Purpose*, p. 132.

they struck the ground simultaneously, his action may be regarded as a symbol of the birth of a new age. It was an age dimly foreseen three hundred years earlier by Roger Bacon when he declared that the science of experiment surpassed those sciences dependent upon argument.[6] The ancients had made brilliant conjectures, of which striking examples are the atomic theory of Democritus and the evolutionist suggestions of Empedocles. Now, instead of conjectures, we have hypotheses carefully tested by the observation of facts, and modified or abandoned as the facts demand.

Christian theology was formulated in terms of the thought of the pre-scientific age. It is true that it did not start with abstractions. The factual element which provided specifically Christian theology with its datum is contained in the Gospel narratives. As Mr. Boys Smith reminds us, 'it was an essential condition of the old scheme that the events with which it was concerned had happened just as they were believed.'[7] It is, I suppose, a consciousness of this which accounts for the stubborn persistence of Fundamentalism. But, nevertheless, the classical Christian theology, breathing the philosophical atmosphere of its age, found its formulation in terms of highly abstract conceptions. Its world was inhabited by Substances, Persons which are not personal, Hypostases which are intermediate between the substantival and adjectival, Natures which do not imply personality. Its climax was the formula of Chalcedon, which, in an essay in *Foundations*, Dr. Temple, the present Archbishop of York, characterized as a confession of the bankruptcy of Greek Patristic Theology.

How tenuous were the abstractions with which theology came to concern itself is well illustrated by two famous proofs for the existence of God, the Ontological Proof and the Cosmological Proof. The Ontological Argument, which was formulated by S. Anselm, Dean Matthews summarizes as an attempt to demonstrate the existence of God from the presence of the idea of God in the human mind.[8] Kant stated it thus: 'The realest of all beings contains all reality; and one is justified in assuming that

[6] W. C. D. Dampier-Whitham, *A History of Science*, p. 101.

[7] J. S. Boys Smith, *Christian Doctrine and the Idea of Evolution*, p. 24.

[8] W. R. Matthews, *The Purpose of God*, p. 14.

such a thing is possible . . . But existence is included in all reality; therefore existence belongs to the concept of a possible being. If, now, this thing does not exist, the inner possibility of it is denied, and this denial is a contradiction.'[9] Surely Mr. Joad is justified when he says of this argument that it reads strangely to modern ears. I will not trouble you with Kant's formulation of the other argument, the Cosmological Argument. I will content myself with saying that to modern ears it reads no less strangely.

I am not concerned here either to affirm or to deny the validity of these two arguments. I only adduce them as examples of theological thought moving in a world of such extreme abstraction that even to enter it is temerarious for one who has not undergone the discipline of a special training in abstract thinking. And when we turn to the professed philosophers who are the very athletes of that discipline, we note that even so their witness agrees not together. Professor Field imagines that the Ontological Argument never convinced anyone except St. Anselm, and doubts whether the Cosmological Argument carries much more conviction to the modern mind.[10] Of both arguments Professor Broad says that, having been permanent invalids since the time of Kant, they have now received their *quietus* at the hands of Dr. Tennant in his *Philosophical Theology*.[11]

Parallel to the road of escape from hard facts *via* extreme intellectual abstraction is the negative road of the mystic. The mystic seeks to rid himself of all desire — not only of the sinful lusts of the flesh, but of all lusts of the flesh. Having divested himself of bodily desire, he strives to suppress all thoughts and memories which are connected with the physical world. Even meditation is deprecated. St. John of the Cross never practised it, and St. Teresa said that 'there is no doubt that the soul which does not meditate arrives much more quickly at contemplation than it would if it attempted to persevere in discursive reasoning.' An attempt is made to exclude all forms of activity with a view to the attainment of a state of pure passivity. The will is anaesthetized. By now a pathological condition has been in-

[9] Quoted by C. E. M. Joad, *Guide to Philosophy*, pp. 116, 117.
[10] G. C. Field, *Studies in Philosophy*, p. 112.
[11] *Mind*, Vol. 38, p. 100.

duced, marked by a crippling lassitude and a desire for death. It is at this point that the mystic enters on the beatific vision or the theopathetic state and claims to receive an ineffable knowledge of God. This knowledge, he avers, is essentially inexpressible; but, so far as he attempts to express it, what he says suggests that he but brings back from his Seventh Mansion what he has unwittingly carried with him on the outward journey. St. Teresa was an orthodox Catholic. Accordingly, her supreme experience took the form of an intellectual vision of the Holy Trinity in which she 'perceived separately and distinctly the Three Persons and understood clearly that they form the same Substance, the same Power, the same Wisdom and one God."[12] It is significant that, though St. Teresa maintained that she was theologically an ignorant woman, traces of extensive reading have been found in her writings. The Brahman or Hindu mystic, on reaching what corresponds to the Seventh Mansion of the Christian mystic, knows with equal immediacy the truth of Brahmanic pantheism or Buddhistic nihilism. One thing we may confidently assert of the negative road of mysticism; pursued to the end it leads to an impregnable certitude. But we need to remind ourselves that certitude is a psychological condition which has no necessary connection with truth. It may be, and often is, associated with a fanatical adhesion to error.

No kind of religious faith which involves a flight from fact is tolerable to those who, whether themselves scientists or not, are children of the age of science. At the same time I hasten to acknowledge, with a heavy heart, that this is an age which even now may be passing away, doomed to be submerged under an uprush of irrationalism and racial pseudo-mysticism. What has the racial myth which holds a great nation under its maleficent spell to do with facts as known to the anthropologist? However, I will content myself with a consideration of the present situation, and not seek to pierce the murky clouds which hide from our eyes an unpredictable future.

For reasons which, I trust, I have in part indicated, there exists a widespread sense of incongruity between the world of religious faith and the world of fact. The framework of reference of the one is different from that of the other.

[12] Roger Bastide, *The Mystical Life*, p. 145.

> 'Until recently,' writes Mr. Boys Smith, 'the Christian scheme of ideas has provided more or less perfectly a framework within which men, simple and learned alike, could order their experience and find it significant. But to-day that scheme of ideas no longer provides such a framework; for it is not sufficiently consistent with normal experience and accepted beliefs to act as their interpretation or as the adequate expression of religious faith. The result is a crisis of the greatest difficulty. The full stress of this crisis has probably not yet been at all generally felt; the most serious difficulties are yet to come.'[13]

Some thirty-five years ago, an Oxford undergraduate laid before a senior member of the University, whose special function it was to give spiritual guidance to his juniors, a difficulty which was troubling him. At times, without, so far as he could see, any assignable cause, religion seemed to become unreal. His mentor assured him that this experience was by no means uncommon, that it was of the nature of a trial to faith, and that the difficulty must be combatted by prayer and assiduous attention to religious devotions. This diagnosis was, I am sure, shallow, and the prescription correspondingly inadequate. The undergraduate was making a sincere attempt to live what was really a double life. His religious life and his everyday life were, to a serious extent, incommensurable. His normal experience and way of thinking, the general atmosphere of his life as a student and a child of the age, were out of tune with his religious life. Hence the painful discord. In endeavouring to live the two lives he was driven to practise a kind of mental and spiritual acrobatics. On occasion such suppleness as he possessed did not suffice to save him from a heavy tumble. His spiritual adviser was blind to what was happening, and, accordingly, his proffered balm healed the hurt only too lightly.

The ecclesiastical opposition to the advance of secular thought in its various departments is significant of a discord which lies deep. After each defeat the ecclesiastic has explained with bland plausibility that all the pother has been of no great importance, and that nothing more is needed than a little adjustment and reinterpretation. Delicately flicking the dust of conflict from his gaiters, he proceeds to make the requisite readjustments and reinterpretations with considerable dexterity. But the departmental conflicts to which I refer are but symptoms. They have taken place within the spheres of geology, historical

[13] J. S. Boys Smith, *Christian Doctrine and the Idea of Evolution*, p. 14.

science, anthropology, biology. In each instance the loyalty to fact of the scientist has been arrayed against the *a priori* presuppositions of the theologian. But, as Dr. Sanday said in his last published writing, 'It is the same mind that has to think of things secular and of things sacred, and the processes of thinking for both are the same.' Secular thought, of course, constructs its concepts, and, in doing so, uses the method of abstraction; but, at the same time, it exhibits its loyalty to factual truth by its readiness to submit its hypotheses, its theories, its conclusions to the test of conformity with facts. Thought about things sacred has, for reasons on which I have touched, tended to make highly questionable claims to autonomy for its own abstractions.

As I approach my subject from the standpoint of one whose main responsibility is pastoral, perhaps I may be allowed to give an illustration, from my own parochial experience, of the difficulty created by the disparity between secular thinking and the highly abstract thinking of the theologian. The regimental officer whose duty lies in the trenches, though saluting with due respect the gold-braided and beribboned staff officer, has a point of view of his own which, he may feel, he has a right and even a duty to express. During a recent preparation course for Confirmation, one of my candidates stayed behind, after the other members of the class had gone, to ask me a question. It was this: 'Why should I believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person?' I had done my best to make the preparation of my candidates devotional and practical. I had explained that when we say that Jesus is the Word of God we mean that in Him the divine thought was expressed. I had made use of the Scholastic interpretation of the Trinity as an expression of the Christian faith in a God Who is Power, Wisdom, and Love. And now I found that I had unwittingly introduced this particular candidate into a world of abstract thinking which was so remote from the world of her ordinary thought that she could not even breathe there. Could I explain to her that the theological conception of a Person is something intermediate between the substantival and adjectival? Of course not. Still less could I adopt the words of a distinguished modern theologian who, using highly abstract mathematical conceptions, sums up the Christian doctrine of

God in the phrase, 'Three Personal Centres of One Absolute Actuality.'[14]

The noise of the more departmental battles between those who claim to be the exponents of faith and those who attach a primary importance to fact has died down. And yet is is a mistake to interpret the silence as peace, for the worlds of fact and faith are still asunder. There is a strong tendency nowadays for the religious teacher to avoid the difficulties which troubled his father by disregarding the factual world. Claiming an autonomy for the world of faith, he withdraws himself within his own domain. The world of fact is the world of observation; his is the world of revelation. He often attaches a normative importance to Tradition as a source and foundation of faith. No doubt in all departments of life tradition has its place. No one will deny that the chemist is descended from the alchemist and the astronomer from the astrologist. But astronomy and chemistry do not appeal to astrology and alchemy as authoritative; nor, for that matter, does the mathematician appeal to Newton against Einstein. It were foolish to ignore the debt we owe to those who have gone before us; we should be grievously impoverished if we were to neglect the thought of great and good men who have laboured to prepare the road along which we advance. But much which they believed we cannot and ought not to believe, and, in important respects, our thought is not as theirs. Especially would I emphasize that, whereas their mode of thought was predominantly deductive, the thought of the modern age has become largely inductive. We live in the world of Galileo, not in that of Aristotle.

Those who stress the authority of Tradition are often driven to treat traditional language symbolically. They would do well to give heed to the warning given by Mr. Boys Smith in his pamphlet, *Christian Doctrine and the Idea of Evolution*:

> 'It is with great difficulty,' he writes, 'and then only imperfectly, that a man can put himself back into the world of a past age, and think as it thought; and the task is no easier in the case of theology than in that of the other activities of the past. No doubt the verbal formulations of doctrine may appear unaltered; but, in fact, they too have changed, because a new content gives them a new significance. To accept, in its *verbal* sense, a doctrine which belongs to another context and another age, is not to accept the old doctrine, but a different and almost invariably a worse one.'[15]

[14] L. S. Thornton, *The Incarnate Lord*, p. 415. [15] *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

Embedded in tradition as a fly in amber are outmoded conceptions which, intolerable though they be to the thought of a later age, still exhibit a remarkable power of survival. Primitive man, hypostasizing pain, conceived it as a stone removable by the medicine-man. At a later stage the Jew thought that the Deity was localized in the Ark and that anyone who was so unfortunate as to touch the sacred receptacle must perish. Tradition has preserved the same type of conception in the cruder forms of sacramentalism. The idea that grace is transmissible through the laying on of hands is not yet dead.

The appeal to Tradition as a ground of faith has many and great dangers. The traditions of the elders are ever liable to petrifaction. If it be an appeal to an authority to which a compulsive force is assigned, whether within the sphere of faith or of morals, it will be vain. Our best educationalists are encouraging successive generations to challenge Tradition in all its forms, and the more vigorous-minded are responding. Nor is the appeal to Tradition very cogent to those who are living an active mental life in an atmosphere very different from that of the world of thought in which Tradition acquired its form. At a recent School Speech Day the invited speaker, a man of influence and great distinction, urged the boys never to take anything for granted, to insist on asking awkward questions, and always to form their own opinions. It is not the least vital and the dullest who respond to this exhortation. One of her pupils on the morning of her Confirmation recently asked a definitely awkward question of the Headmistress of a well-known Girls' Public School. She wanted to know what was meant by the affirmation of the divinity of Christ. The girl was puzzled, and transparently honest. I am sure that her bewilderment would not have been lessened if the Headmistress had replied that Jesus Christ was of one substance with the Father, and that He came down from heaven. The great theologians who coined these phrases dwelt in a world in which the framework of thought was different from that of to-day. In that distant world our academic theologians have naturalized themselves. It is only so that they can preserve the treasures of old time. But when they come to the children of the twentieth century talking the language of the fifth century, they are, it is to be feared, wasting their breath.

The same Headmistress told me that she finds it simply useless to tell the best of her girls, the girls who are the natural leaders among their fellows, that a thing is wrong. They want to know *why* it is wrong. In other words, for them the authority of Tradition has been displaced by the authority of Reason.

All this may make the work of the parochial clergy more interesting; it certainly makes it no easier. Many seek a way of escape. Some exploit their own personality, if it happens to be attractive, and they have the gift of 'getting it across' from the pulpit to the congregation. They make no great claims on the intelligence of their people, and it would be futile for the more intelligent of their people to make any great claim on theirs. They are generous of emotion, and are rather addicted to accusing the more thoughtful of their fellow-clergy of an intellectualism which they are pleased to stigmatize as dry. It may be objected that they are unduly jealous for the assumed interests of the intellectually weaker members of the flock, and are apt to forget that God has endowed us with minds as well as with wills and emotions. They are often lovable men, and no one will grudge them their measure of success within their own sphere. Others, though in private they may show themselves to be theologians of a drastically critical type, in public ministrations also appeal to the emotions, though in a different and less personal way. They have a *flair* for what is beautiful, dignified, and awe-inspiring in ritual and ceremonial. They are adepts in the technique of mass-psychology. They put liturgiology first and theology second. These again do not fail to find ample material responsive to their art. Others indulge in a pseudo-mysticism which wafts the worshipper into a realm where the doors are bolted against the intrusion of the hard facts and clamant problems of everyday life. What they offer, however, is, in truth, only mysticism and water, heavily sugared with sentimentality. It finds musical expression in the worst of the more popular mid-Victorian tunes of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. The genuine mystic would give it very short shrift. 'You would be terrified,' says St. Teresa, 'if God showed you how He treats contemplatives . . . Those who are in the active life fancy that in the mystical state there is nothing but sweetness and delight. But I say that they could probably not support for

a single day the sufferings to which contemplatives are quite accustomed.'

Such are some of the ways of escape from a difficult situation. None of them provides a solution. The interests of religion demand that the schism between the realm of fact and the realm of faith should be healed. This will not be done by a manipulation of facts, however skilful, to force them into conformity with a preconceived faith. The theologian must use the inductive method and use it honestly, though the range of facts with which he is concerned is wider than the range of facts with which the departmental sciences deal. The use of the inductive method does not affect the need of conceptual thinking, and the theologian will require his own special concepts. Within the sphere of physics the concept of organism is supererogatory. The physicist accordingly does not use it. It is, however, essential to the biologist.

Among the facts which face the theologian are facts with which the natural scientist is not concerned. There are facts of experience which are, as Professor Hobhouse says, as real as the fact that we feel heat and cold.

> 'There is a true spiritual insight, that is to say, an apprehension of the workings of the psychical, a sense of those deeper realities on which our personal life and our relations to others rest. Such insight is for most men fitful, and reached only through some experience heavily charged with emotion. It may come in the romance of love or through the equally passionate and less selfish devotion to a child, through the stress of danger, or of temptation, or more calmly and equably in the communion with nature, or in the clear-sighted vision of large human issues and the ordered movement of the world.'[16]

In dealing with such facts a rigid intellectual self-discipline is essential. They are so highly charged with our emotions that they may easily lead us into believing just what we want to believe; and if we once allow ourselves to begin to slide down that slippery slope we shall find it difficult to stay a downward course which will eventually land us in the bog of irrationalism.

I have had occasion to refer to the method of induction. It is a method which is incapable of strict logical justification. It is based on a reasonable faith in the regularity of Nature. This faith is reasonable in that it provides a clue to an increased understanding of Nature. It is faith in that it is incapable of complete verification. It is not subjective or based on *a priori*

[16] L. T. Hobhouse, *Development and Purpose*, p. 120.

conceptions, for historically it is born of observation of facts and of attempts to deal with them. If religion finds in the much wider field of facts with which it is concerned a similar clue, and lives in the faith that this clue is a reliable guide for belief and action, it ill befits the natural scientist to demur. The belief of natural science in the regularity of Nature is incapable of logical proof. I readily admit that the faith of the religious believer that the Universe is reasonable, that it exhibits purpose, and that that purpose is good, is equally incapable of compulsive logical proof. But it is no more baseless than is the faith of the scientist.

Dr. Tennant in his book *Philosophical Theology* works out with great thoroughness the line of thought which leads from facts of experience to a reasonable religious faith, while the Dean of St. Paul's in a more popular work, *The Purpose of God*, displays the teleological argument in a form calculated to make a cogent appeal to any thoughtful reader of ordinary education. In such a paper as this it is impossible to indicate except in barest outline the strength of the argument. I must content myself with likening it to a cord of five strands each reinforcing the others. First there is the fact that the Universe has been responsive to the efforts of reason to understand it. Then there is the fact of evolution and the emergence of organic life. 'We shall not,' says Mr. Joseph, 'fully understand organic life without first attending to the life of the mind. By all means investigate the range of processes in the living body that conform to the schemes of chemistry and physics; but if you think there is nothing else, do not speak of evolution.'[17] The third fact is the preparedness of the world to be the home of organic life. For the maintenance of life there is necessary an environment which 'must be complex and dependent on a multiplicity of coincident conditions, such as are not reasonably attributable to blind forces or to pure mechanism.' As Dr. Tennant says, 'Presumably the world is comparable with a single throw of dice. And common-sense is not foolish in suspecting the dice to have been loaded.'[18] In the fourth place the beauty and sublimity of Nature have their message. Beauty is not created out of nothing by our own minds. It is the world which evokes our aesthetic response. In other words, as Professor Stout says, we are not 'like the dog

[17] H. W. B. Joseph, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, p. 333.
[18] F. R. Tennant, *Philosophical Theology*, Vol. II, p. 87.

in the fable who jumps into the water after the reflection of the bone in his own mouth.'[19] It is not true that 'we receive but what we give.' 'Meredith's mother-earth is not for him just another Meredith, and it is not just another Wordsworth that Wordsworth felt as "something far more deeply interfused, whose glory is the light of setting suns".'[20] Finally, the world subserves moral ends; it has produced moral beings; it is, in the familiar phrase of Keats, 'the vale of soul-making.' It cannot be denied that each of these five sets of facts is capable of an explanation other than the religious one; but, taken together, reinforcing one another as they do, their combined strength is great. Of this kind of advance from Fact to Faith, Professor Broad has said that, 'if one *must* try to explain the ultimate and formulate the ineffable,' it provides perhaps 'the least unintelligible explanation and the least misleading formulation available to us now and here.'[21] We should not be here, I suppose, unless we were now attempting to do what Professor Broad describes in terms to which, however, we should not assent. We may therefore accept his *dictum*, though we alter his formulation of it. We would rather say that the line to which he gives his somewhat critical approval provides the most intelligible and the truest explanation of the Universe of which we are a part.

Finally, I would again stress that the facts from which we proceed to faith are wider than those with which the departmental sciences are concerned. They are the facts of our total experience. Among these facts, central among them, and giving the rest point and significance, is the fact of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ not regarded as 'a divine intruder'[22] but as a real man. Without Christ the world would, for me, be a different place, and the journey from fact to faith would not be made with the same confidence.

But, I remind myself, the unforgivable sin at our Conferences is to trespass within the sphere of another man's paper. As other speakers are dealing with the subjects of the Historic Jesus, and the Significance of Jesus for Faith, I must not transgress my set bounds, but must leave the consideration of this aspect of our Conference Subject in their hands.

[19] G. F. Stout, *Mind and Matter*, p. 58. [20] *Ibid*, p. 59.
[21] *Mind*, Vol. 39, p. 483.
[22] C. E. Raven, *Jesus and the Gospel of Love*, p. 430.

WHAT TO BELIEVE ABOUT MAN

By the Rev. J. C. Hardwick, M.A., B.Sc., Vicar of Partington.

We may outline first the traditional Christian view of Man, and then the modern scientific view. We can then examine the two to see which of them is the more true. If we find that we can accept neither as it stands, we shall have to see what elements in either or both can be taken over.

The traditional Christian view of Man is that he is a self-directing person — that is to say, a spiritual being with free will. He was created 'to praise, reverence, and serve God.' That is to say, he was created, not for his own sake, but for God's sake. Man was created innocent and blessed, but he 'fell' through his own disobedience. He thus came under the dominion of sin — a state when the will is perverted and the mind darkened. At he same time he became subject to both physical and spiritual death. To save him from this condition, *i.e.* to redeem him, God sent His Only Son into the world, who by taking human nature upon Him, raised it from its fallen estate to the condition in which it had been before the Fall. Man, even though fallen, is lord of all things on the earth; everything on the face of the earth both living and not living was created for his sake, and in order to aid him in the prosecution of the end for which he was created — the praise, service, and knowledge of God.[1]

The single dark shadow on this otherwise bright picture is the doctrine of 'original sin,' according to which all mankind merits the wrath of God because of the sin of Adam, whose descendants are all tainted with his sin, and fall under the penalties incurred thereby. But against this we have to set the doctrines of atonement and redemption. Man is not abandoned by God to bear the consequences of Adam's sin and his own; God's

[1] The 'First Principle and Foundation' of St. Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, which may presumably be taken as an expression of rigidly orthodox belief, begins as follows: 'Man was created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul; and other things on the face of the earth were created for man's sake, and in order to aid him in the prosecution of the end for which he was created.'

Son came into the world to die on his behalf, and to 'take away' his sin.

But it is impossible to deny that the picture as a whole is not only bright, but dazzling in its glorious optimism. Man is destined for bliss — that is the end for which he was created.[2] That bliss will also be eternal. Man is also the object of God's intense love. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' And not only God, but a whole hierarchy of heavenly beings watch with rapt attention the fate of Man. Man, too, is the child of God, and his potentialities are infinite. 'Beloved, now are we sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.' Moreover, Man is a free and responsible being. This involves his being able to choose evil rather than good. Thus even sin may be said to proceed from the dignity of Man's nature. Only a free being can merit punishment.

It is sometimes said that the traditional Christian view of Man is pessimistic. The Bible contains verses like, 'Verily, every man living is altogether vanity.' 'There is none that doeth good, no, not one.' But it must always be remembered that Christianity, apart from its belief in God (Who is regarded always as an active agency), is fundamentally pessimistic. 'Without God, and without hope in the world' — the two things go together, absence of God and absence of hope. The future Golden Age on the earth for all mankind as visualized by secularist evolutionary optimists, who believe in progress without believing in God, would have been simply unthinkable to St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Francis, St. Thomas Aquinas, to Luther. The book *Ecclesiastes*, though written in its original form by an atheist, is rightly included in the Canon of Scripture, because it shows what is the Christian view of human life without God — miserable, wearisome, empty. The novels of the late Mr. Thomas Hardy are highly Christian for this reason: they accept the Christian estimate of Man and his life upon this earth — apart from any belief in a God who is interested in Man. Having rejected the Christian doctrine of God, Mr. Hardy remained faithful to what Christianity teaches about Man apart

[2] *Ultimus finis hominis est beatitudo.*

from God. Hardy understood Christianity better than did the poet Tennyson; and was nearer to it. The same is true of Mr. Housman in his collection of poems, *The Shropshire Lad*. 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!' is the traditional Christian view of Man's life apart from a belief in God.

In another respect the traditional Christian view may appear pessimistic. Owing to its doctrine of 'original sin,' traditional Christianity has no belief in the 'perfectibility' of Man through natural processes of evolution. It holds that there is something essentially defective about unregenerate human nature, and this will never cease to be a fruitful cause of trouble. A perfect society will not be formed out of imperfect human material except by the gift of Divine Grace: the problem is not one of organization so much as of Divine intervention. The position is expressed by Dostoievsky in a passage put into the lips of Mitya in *The Brothers Karamazov*:

> 'It's God that's worrying me. That's the only thing that's worrying me. What if He does not exist? What if Ratikin's right — that it's an idea made up by men? Then, if He doesn't exist, man is the chief of the earth, of the universe. Magnificent! Only how is he going to be good without God? That's the question. I always come back to that. For whom is man going to love then? To whom will he be thankful? To whom will be sing the hymn? Ratikin laughs. Ratikin says that one can love humanity without God. Well, only a snivelling idiot can maintain that. I can't understand it. Life's easy for Ratikin. "You'd better think of the extension of civil rights, or even of keeping down the price of meat. You will show your love of humanity more simply and directly by that, than by philosophy." I answered him, "Well, but you, without a God, are more likely to raise the price of meat if it suits you, and make a rouble on every kopeck." He lost his temper.'

And now we may turn from the traditional Christian view of Man to the modern scientific view of him. Science, of course, is a general term; there is not Science in general, but particular sciences, and the sciences which chiefly concern us here are biology and psychology — the sciences of life and mind (as is natural — Man being a mind-endowed organism).

But before we approach these sciences a word may be said about astronomy, since much stress is placed upon the disintegrating effects of the Copernican astronomy upon the traditional Christian view of Man. It is customary to compare the homely size as well as the spiritual nature of the pre-Copernican

universe, with the vast tracts of empty space or incandescent gas with which the sciences of astronomy and astro-physics present us. Instead of the heavenly spheres, the abodes of angelic beings, revolving round the earth, and beyond all the abode of God Himself, we get an incalculably vast emptiness — the whole without mind or consciousness and quite indifferent to Man, who lives upon a minor planet of a quite insignificant star, which is one of millions of others in a universe which itself is only one of millions of other universes.

The importance of all this has been very much exaggerated. To begin with, size is relative, and as Anatole France has observed, if our universe shrank overnight to the size of a walnut, no one could possibly notice it. As it is, it is said to be expanding; but this makes no perceptible difference. Furthermore, regarded from the other end, from the end of infinite smallness and not that of infinite bigness, the individual human being is himself a universe. Five thousand million red corpuscules swim in his blood stream, and each corpuscule contains I know not how many molecules. And the atoms which form the molecules are mostly composed of empty space, with electrons whirling around like flies in a cathedral.

And as for these vast or minute spaces being without mind, apart from the mind of the observer and calculator they become nothing but formulae. There must be an observer to measure these vast spaces, some standard of reference. Where is space apart from a mind to measure it? Or time apart from a consciousness to experience it? As a matter of fact the mathematician Pascal in the seventeenth century, in a few pregnant sentences, knocked the bottom out of the spectre-raising astronomy which by the mere conception of magnitude strives to make us regard ourselves as worms and not men. The bluff of the astronomers should be called right away. Why should we be afraid of bigness, of these vast tracts of emptiness or of flaming gas? Is it because our standards are quantitative, because we are materialists?

And now for the science of life — biology. This too is commonly supposed to have knocked the bottom out of the traditional Christian conception of Man. It is true that the explanation offered by St. Paul of the 'sinful' state of Man was that

'the first Adam' had sinned, with results which infected all his descendants with 'original sin.' And it is true, too, that biological science (not to mention anthropology and the critical study of the Pentateuch) have made it impossible to regard the first chapters of *Genesis* as history. We know that the Adam and Eve story is a myth. But no one imagines that the doctrine of 'original sin' (true or false) rests upon the *Genesis* story! It rests upon the surest of foundations — experience. 'For the good which I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise.' It is true that St. Paul explained his sinful condition, and that of other men, by reference to the Adam and Eve story, which he undoubtedly regarded as history (though history and cosmology in his mind were not dissociated). But by so explaining his condition he did not explain it away — he only attributed it to a cause which we cannot regard as the correct one. That his explanation was mistaken does not affect the correctness of his analysis of his condition, or of ours. The obvious defects and miseries of men may not be due to a Fall, but they nevertheless exist. Many people imagine that disbelief in *Genesis* warrants disbelief in 'original sin' (or some equivalent — we need not haggle about words). But that 'original sin' does not necessarily require the belief in a Fall to rest upon is proved by the fact that 'original sin' has been believed in by people who never heard of Adam's fall. The pagan mystery cults were based on the belief that Man needed purification and redemption, and from what does a man need purification and redemption if not a state of sin — a condition when he feels stained and degraded and miserable? A thousand years before St. Augustine wrote his immortal *Confessions*, Orphism heralded in Europe a doctrine of the weakness and sinfulness of Man, and his need of grace and cathartic ritual.[3]

The truth is that any attitude which is specifically religious and not merely secularist or humanistic, is bound to involve this sense of sin, which is such a scandal to the enlightened and emancipated. Sin, not as a particular act of wrongdoing, a peccadillo, but as a *state* (sin is a disease, a particular act of sin is only a symptom). When a man is disturbed by an ideal of divine perfection which he cannot attain, then he suffers from a sense

[3] Angus, *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World*, p. 43.

of sin, *i.e.* a sense of contrast between the ideal and the sordid actuality of his achievement. It is, of course, not the worldling or reprobate who suffers most from a sense of sin, but only the man who has a more or less lively sense of a divine perfection, or at least of standards which are unattainable, and of his lamentable falling short thereof. Sin is in short a *religious* conception; the way in which ethical conceptions are understood by the religious consciousness. Men who lie down comfortably in the cages to which their nature confines them, do not suffer from a sense of sin; it is those who prowl restlessly to and fro behind the bars who call themselves sinners. For them, the cage of their nature is a prison which cannot be broken by frantic beatings from within, but only by an interposition from without. Only the divine grace will free the sinner.

Before passing on from biology we may add that the more hard-boiled biologist of to-day is less inclined to take stock in those golden hopes which gladdened the hearts of evolutionary optimists a generation or two ago. Professor J. B. S. Haldane tells us that he finds no evidence that there has been any advance in the intrinsic factors making for intelligence in Europeans during the last 50,000 years. One school of anthropologists holds upon good evidence that the men of the primitive Stone Age were less cruel, less acquisitive, and less pugnacious than 'civilized' man who has been educated in cruelty and other vices. From the evolutionary standpoint Man may as easily prove to be a dead end as a source of further advance. He may become extinct, or he may simply be arrested, like the social insects, who were as they now are millions of years before the human species appeared upon this earth.

We may now pass on to the pronouncements of the modern psychologist (of the 'Behaviourist' school) upon the nature of Man. If the biologist declines to play the part of announcer to the millenium, the psychologist is even less obliging. He claims to have disposed of any pretentions which our species may have to be regarded as a rational animal. Man can no longer feed his self-esteem on this delusion. He is the slave of his passions and instincts; and what differentiates him from the animals is not that he is essentially more rational, but only that he is more cunning, and more given to self-deception.

In holding this estimate of Man, the psychologist may be thought to be reviving the doctrine of Original Sin in an even less attractive form; but in point of fact he is doing nothing so complimentary, for the psychologist does not regard Man as a moral being at all, or even as a 'being,' for the matter of that. Man has no free will; his behaviour is just a matter of stimulus and reaction. The 'basis of reaction' in the case of a man is far more complex than in the case of a dog, and for this reason a man's reactions are often more difficult to predict. But his reactions are none the less mechanical. Behind the actions of a man there is no being who is responsible for them in any moral sense.

It is true that the psychologist announces that he is, or soon will be, able to provide a technique for changing human nature (which is what traditional Christianity has been trying to do, with indifferent success, for close on two thousand years). But what guarantee is there that the psychologist will change Man for the better? As we look round on the contemporary scene we can observe every device of psychological science being employed, in the technique of propaganda, to submerge the modest amount of rationality possessed by the average human. Psychology is being used at present to dehumanize us. The herd mentality is being deliberately fostered and exploited. If the psychological technicians are going to be our tutors, all one can say is *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*

It should be noted that the psychologists, owing to their determinist theories, are betraying the whole conception of personality and the sacredness of the individual. It is not at all beside the mark to note how the new psychological doctrines are being accompanied by new political, economic, and social ideals which reduce the individual to the status of a unit. Modern industrialism (the product of determinist science) has prepared the way for modern militarism and fascism and for the totalitarian state. To-day the ordinary citizen is a cog in the industrial machine, cannon fodder for the military machine, and a rubber stamp for the bosses of the political machine which, of course, is riddled with graft. No one of these modern machines possesses any soul or morals (how can a machine possess either?). Hobbes's Leviathan was a very gentle beast compared with any of them.

Thus we need not look to the biologists and psychologists to make our golden dreams come true. But why should we look to the scientist as a saviour? Science is useful and indeed indispensable, but it is instrumental only and can supply us neither with ideals nor with goals. Science is morally neutral. In the hands of a good man it is good, but in the hands of a bad man it is bad; and in this case the more efficient it is the worse it becomes. It is because modern science is so efficient that it is so dangerous. I am not so foolish as to plead that science should be scrapped, or even that scientists should take a holiday — we want not less science, but more. The point is that science itself cannot save us. At present, owing to human greed and selfishness, science is not allowed to bestow its gifts upon us in full measure — its work is sabotaged by vested interests as every student of science knows.[4] And where it is not sabotaged, it is too often used for either completely trivial or destructive purposes. Miracles of scientific technique are employed by press, cinema and radio to disseminate nonsense, and by the chemists to manufacture explosives and poison gas which have now become adjuncts of civilization and as necessary to our welfare as food.

Having, then, examined, all too briefly, the traditional Christian, and the modern scientific, views of Man, which of the two do we propose to choose; or if we can choose neither of them, can we find a *tertium quid?*

Of course if the modern scientific view is the true one, we shall have to accept it, and with as good grace as we can, submit to being automata — unworthy of being damned, since the morally irresponsible cannot be judged. We shall have to allow too that as individuals we are entirely without value, save perhaps each to himself and a few others, in the same way as a rat

[4] 'The man of science must take up an apologetic attitude at the present time,' writes Sir Daniel Hall, 'with regard to agriculture. For two generations he has been entreated to make the land more productive and to reduce costs; but, as an American Professor of Agriculture writes to me, "Ten million acres of cotton and some thousands of tobacco have been ploughed under. The latest move is the killing of some five million pigs under 1,000 lb. and the slaughter of some 200,000 prospective mother sows. If this will bring national prosperity I have wasted my life." The man of science may be forgiven if he concludes that he is no longer wanted.' (Lecture on 'Science and Agriculture' reported in *Nature*, 11th Nov., 1933. Quoted by Beatrice and Sidney Webb in *Soviet Communism*, 1936, p. 981.)

is of value. And in addition to this all our values will have no objective validity. Nor need we look to biology for any hope of progress. Looking around us in civilized Europe we see that the 'survival of the fittest' is the survival of those fittest to live a predatory and unscrupulous life.[5] Nor can we trust the psychologist to 'condition' us into virtue; he will more probably condition us into vice.

Of course, the scientific view of man as a physico-chemico-neural mechanism is true in a symbolic way, in the same way as a mathematical formula is true. But it is a highly abstract form of truth — you cannot live on it, any more than you can live on the menu card which describes a meal.

The first element of the Christian traditional view of Man which we ought to appropriate, should certainly be that he is a morally responsible being. The belief that we are so is based on the knowledge which we have of ourselves *from inside*.

The second element of traditional Christian teaching about Man that we can safely take over is that the individual is of supreme value. This involves the question, *To whom is he of value?* and the answer is, *To God*. Apart from the existence of God, the individual can have no intrinsic value — he is valuable only to those men who actually do value him, and if none value him, then he is of no value, save to himself, and that is only a subjective value.

The third element of traditional Christian doctrine about Man that we can accept is that there is something absolute and not merely relative about Man's ideas of right. In short, they are not only *his* ideas, but God's ideas. If there be no God, no ultimate standard of reference, all moral values are relative merely.

Nor need we be ashamed to take over a fourth element from the traditional Christian teaching about Man — the doctrine of 'original sin.' We cannot believe in an historical fall, but rather in an evolutionary rise. But this idea of a rise must not make us

[5] 'With such an animal as man, who, from the "natural history" point of view, has won his position of supremacy among other animals because of his superior cunning — not at all on account of his sensibility — it must inevitably happen that the survival of the fittest man is the survival of the most cunning, the most vehemently acquisitive and unscrupulous.' (Eric Gill, *Necessity of Belief*, p. 236.)

too complacent. We may have risen 'above' the beasts, but are we better than they? That we are more cruel, more greedy, more lustful, can hardly be denied. We are indeed more cunning; but is cunning a moral quality? Man is imperfect, and in his sane moments (when he is not blinded by pride and ignorance) he knows himself to be so, especially in comparison with a divine goodness which he can picture. He knows that 'In me there dwells no good thing,' and he knows also that 'Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.'

Finally, we may remain by the belief that Man is a 'child of God,' and that on this account men are brothers.

It is important to place an intelligible meaning upon a phrase like 'child of God.' It suggests primarily (at least to my mind) that Man *can know* God, that is to say, have conscious experience of Him, or communion with Him. Yet more often than not the idea that Man is a child of God appears to be a purely speculative notion, or even equivalent to the truism that Man has emerged 'from the source of all being,' like everything else. In that sense the shrimp and the catfish are also children of God.

As a matter of fact 'conscious experience of God' is not shared by everybody, or at least not to the extent that is sometimes suggested. It would often appear, indeed, that Man is a non-religious animal, so rudimentary does his sense of God seem to be. Yet the sense is there, whether rudimentary or developed, and is the source of all religion, just as the sense of beauty (perhaps another form of the sense of God) is the source of all art. Perhaps it is more natural to some races than to others, though no race and no type has a monopoly of it. The Semites, perhaps through their familiarity with the vast, bare spaces of the desert, and of clear star-lit heavens, were particularly prone to it and have been 'monopolists of revealed religions.'

> 'The common base of all the Semitic creeds,' writes T. E. Lawrence, was the ever-present idea of world-worthlessness. . . . In his life he had air and winds, sun and light, open spaces and a great emptiness. There was no human effort, no fecundity in Nature: just the heaven above and the unspotted earth beneath. There unconsciously he came near God.
>
> 'The Beduin could not look for God within him: he was too sure that he was within God. . . . Those who went into the desert long

enough to forget its open spaces and its emptiness were inevitably thrust upon God as the only refuge and rhythm of being.' [6]

It was no mere coincidence that it was into the Nitrian Desert that those swarmed who took more seriously than life itself the search for God in the third and fourth centuries of our era. The sneers and caricatures of Gibbon fail altogether to give us a true idea of the single-heartedness, gentleness and true courtesy of these 'fanatics.' Readers of Miss Helen Waddell's latest book, *The Desert Fathers*, will have their eyes opened. But in our day, as Miss Waddell observes, men may give their lives to scientific research, to Arctic exploration, to the conquest of Everest, to the mastery of the air, to some speed record. They may also die in whole battalions in some criminally mismanaged offensive of a European war. But 'the only field of research in which a man may make no sacrifices, under pain of being called a fanatic, is God.' [7]

The search for God needs to be taken more seriously. Perhaps we need a modern Third Order of St. Francis. But this desired quality of consciousness — awareness of eternity or of God — must be accompanied by an enhanced awareness of Man.

'Can I see another's woe
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief
And not seek for kind relief?'

As Blake doubtless knew, the difficulty lies in being able to *see* another's woe. When we do see it, it is not hard to 'be in sorrow too.' But we do not see; for we are either too afraid, or too indolent, or too self-centred to look. We lack the sense of human solidarity.

Compare our attitude with that which must have lain behind such passages of the New Testament as I *Cor.* xiii and I *John* iv, 7, 8. Perhaps the reason why respectable people are so satisfied with individualism both in religion and in every sphere of life, is that, unlike St. Augustine, we have not had the courage

[6] *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, pp. 39*ff*

[7] *The Desert Fathers*, p. 25: 'Gaugin, like any Desert fanatic, left his Paris banking house and his comfortable wife, and watched his small son starve and himself died in nakedness and ecstasy, because he had discovered paint as the Desert had discovered God. Van Gogh went mad in struggling to paint light: they found a fragment of a letter in his pocket after he had shot himself: "Well, my own work, I am risking my life for it, and my reason has half foundered in it—that's all right."'

or vitality to work through all individual satisfactions, to find at last that they are worth little. We are self-indulgent, but only in a mild, tentative fashion. We never reach the point of disillusion and disgust when we cry: 'Individualism is not enough; by my appetite for living I know there *is* something more, and cost what it may, I will find it.'[8]

It is worth noting that in the teaching of Jesus awareness of God and awareness of Man go together. The motive of humane and generous behaviour was a realization of the divine generosity. Men were to love their enemies, bless those that cursed them, do good to those that hated them. Why?

> '*That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:* for he maketh his sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.'

For Jesus, righteousness was *filial*, *i.e.* proceeded from community of nature between Man and God (so that awareness of Man and awareness of God do go together). 'Be ye therefore perfect, *even as your Heavenly Father is perfect.*' The motive again is the same.[9]

Far too much is made by orthodox commentators of the sayings of Jesus in *John* iii, 3 and 5: 'Except a man be born "from above" he cannot see the kingdom of God,' and 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' This story of Nicodemus is the Johannine equivalent of the Synoptic story of the man who asked what he should do 'to inherit eternal life.'[10] There the answer given by Jesus laid down moral conditions only: 'Thou knowest the commandments, etc.' There is not a word about rebirth 'from above' or through the water and the spirit of baptism. The economy of salvation is quite different.[11] The Synoptic equivalent of the saying about the new birth is: 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.'[12] It is as if pure, unadulterated, human nature, unsophisticated and unspoiled, were something to which we had to get back. Jesus, of course, speaks of the need of repentance, but what is repent-

[8] See Heard, *Social Substance of Religion*, p. 204.

[9] This point is insisted upon by the late Prof. B. W. Bacon in his great book, *Studies in Matthew*.

[10] *Mk.* x, 17-22, and parallels.

[11] Loisy, *Le Quatrième Évangile*, p. 154.

[12] *Mk.* x, 15.

ance but a sudden awareness of one's own nature? This involves a recoil and a redirection of the will. This in turn is followed by forgiveness. Such is the economy of salvation taught by Jesus, and no sacramental machinery is introduced into His scheme of salvation.

The appeal throughout in the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels was to 'the innate moral and religious instinct of man.'[12] Though he did not identify the divine and the human, Jesus never taught or implied the existence of a gulf between them. There was a community of nature, apart from which, indeed, man could not have known God. To serve and love God and His fellow man seemed to Jesus *natural*. Thus Jesus believed in Man; and we are entitled to believe in him too, while aware of his errors and sins which make life a misery for so many.

[13] Bacon, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

WHAT TO BELIEVE ABOUT GOD

By the Rev. T. F. Royds, B.D., Rector of Haughton, Staffordshire.

THIS year is the bicentenary of Butler's *Analogy*. In that famous work Butler assumes that there is 'an intelligent Author of nature, and natural Governor of the world.' He does not attempt to prove it, because it is taken for granted by his opponents, the Deists, and 'by the generality of those who profess themselves dissatisfied with the evidence of religion.' His conclusion is, briefly, that the God of Nature and the God of Revelation are the same God, and that it is as easy, or as difficult, to believe in the one as in the other. Thus he caused James Martineau to exclaim that he had written 'one of the most terrible persuasives to atheism ever produced.' Butler's encounter with John Wesley is well known. He said to Wesley, 'The pretending to extraordinary revelation and gifts of the Holy Ghost is a horrid thing, Sir, a very horrid thing.' But does not Wesley's fire burn brighter now than Butler's cold dry light? And if so, why?

The subject of my paper is not 'How to believe in God,' but 'What to believe about God.' It is now a commonplace, taught by George Tyrrell, and before him by John Caird, that religion and theology are two different things. But if religion can flourish in some people without theology, theology implies religion. I cannot eliminate the personal element—my own experience of God such as it is—and I do not think you would wish me to do so. I shall not discuss at length the ontological or cosmological arguments for God; not because I think philosophy means finding bad reasons for what we all knew before, but because for you it would be burdensome and for me unsafe. You can read about them in the Dean of St. Paul's recent book, *The Purpose of God*. I shall try to put myself beside the man in the street—yet not quite, for the man in the street is usually thinking more about how to cross it safely than about whether God controls any sort of traffic. I prefer to say the man in the office or study, who is exploring every avenue to God by arti-

ficial light; or the man in the field, who is surrounded by the works of God every day, but is not sure whether God still takes any interest in them. Such men want to know enough about God for practical purposes, and I believe they can.

> 'God stooping shews sufficient of His light
> For us i' the dark to rise by.'

Man cannot know what God *is*, but he can know something about Him by observing what He *does*. Round the central core of his faith there must be ever-widening rings of agnosticism. How can Man obtain knowledge of God? There are three ways: (1) through Nature, (2) through Christ, (2) through self. And these three ways correspond to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Which is the chief way? The answer must vary with the individual. Some theists ignore the second way, through Christ; but the first and third ways are common property. So, indirectly, is the second way, because theism means sharing the faith of Christ, the Captain and Perfecter of our faith. We cannot ignore His beliefs about God.

Was Christ fallible in His eschatology, history, science and higher criticism, but infallible in His teaching about God? I doubt if the question is worth discussing seriously. Infallibility in a person really implies infallibility in his hearers, for words are fluid things and convey different meanings to different people. They can change their meaning, or lose it by translation. There is no such thing as an infallible doctrine of God. But Christ knew God a great deal better than we do, and to ignore His life and teaching when we are asking what to believe about God is like arguing about immortality without weighing the evidence for His resurrection.

But I must not trespass on ground that will probably be covered by two papers to-morrow. I will confine myself to the knowledge of God that comes to us through science, through history, and through psychology — or, if you prefer it, through introspection and self-analysis. First of all, what has God done in the past thousands and millions of years? 'God created our first parents, Adam and Eve, and placed them in Eden, an earthly Paradise.' That is a quotation not from an old commentary, but from *A Communicant's Manual*, by Dr. B. W. Randolph, which is still being given to boys at a first-rate public

school. I take it from page seven. Six pages later there is a note: 'Do not take the story of Adam and Eve as *literal history*.' Apparently it is history, but not literal history. Fundamentalists and anti-evolutionists may now safely be ranked with British Israelites, Seventh Day Adventists and other peculiar people. But if it is inexact to say that God created the earth and all that therein is at any particular time or times, what are we to believe about it? Did He guide and control the whole process of evolution? Did He deliberately design not only behemoth and leviathan, 'the kings of the sons of pride,' but also 'things creeping innumerable, both small and great beats?' *i.e.* including the most deadly bacilli and the most loathsome parasites? Did He go on designing and controlling till He had achieved Man, the crown and goal of evolution, and endowed him with free will and moral responsibility? Did He then leave this self-conscious, self-determining being to work out his own salvation or damnation? If we think so, we have come to the paradoxical conclusion that God kept evolution in His own hands till it was complete, and then refrained from interfering in the moral and spiritual development of its highest product.

I think the opposite is nearer the truth. God is revealed, expressed, or immanent (whichever is the right word) more in living than in dead matter, more in animal than in vegetable life, more in human than in animal life, and most of all in rational and moral life. But was not the hand of God to be seen in the upward climbing of our ancestors millions of years ago? Probably just as much and as little as it is to be seen to-day? Life has within it some *nisus* towards perfection, which masquerades under such names as life-force, *élan vital*, vitalism, directivity, and emergent evolution. To quote René Fülöp-Miller in the *Hibbert Journal* of last January: 'Modern biology has come to recognize that there exists in Nature an enigmatic formative impulse (*Gestalttrieb*), one which defies rational analysis.' To illustrate this he mentions that Driesch cut the ovum of a sea-urchin in four parts, and each part became a perfect sea-urchin. The universe expands and contracts, he says: it has a diastole and systole without our knowing why. According to Jeans, it is 'more like a great thought than a great mechanism.' 'We are once more compelled to believe in a spirit . . .

a sublime but incomprehensible power beyond the measurable and the calculable.' In the well-known words of an American poet,[1] 'Some call it Evolution, and others call it God.'

But if the Creator is in his Creation, it is dangerous to assume that He is in the smallest details of it. Life includes a tendency to variation; and so we get the struggle for existence, natural selection, sexual selection, selection by Man, and finally the survival of the fittest, but also sometimes of the unfittest. If there is teleology in Nature, there is also dysteleology. As Heraclitus put it, πόλεμος πατὴρ πάντων. 'Strife is the ancestor of all things.' The victory belongs to whatever has survival value in the unceasing conflict. But the Lord is not in the wind, and the Lord is not in the fire. It is incorrect to speak of God as present in space at all. And Spirit cannot occupy matter. God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, or in idols of wood and stone. The belief that He can dwell in bread, or wine, or oil, or water, is a mere deduction from doubtful premises, unverifiable by any test at all, whether scientific or religious.

God is Life, and God is Spirit. A modern Augustine might have said 'God is Ether,' all-pervading. But Spirit is where Spirit acts, that is, in and through spirits. 'The kingdom of God is within you.' (Not merely 'in your midst,' but ἐντὸς ὑμῶν.) God is in Man. God is in Man more than in the rest of creation, and most of all in the Perfect Man, Jesus Christ. But I must pass on to the problem of God in history.

Is history the unfolding of God's plan or purpose for the world, or is it merely 'a discreditable episode in the life-story of a minor planet?' Is there a God 'whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth'? Obviously not. The Latin version of this collect, by the way, is comparatively respectable.[2] But is God to be compared to the policeman who stands on the pavement watching the traffic-lights and traffic, notebook in hand? Or is He actually on point-duty, stopping and sending on whom He wills? In other words, does God reserve the right to thwart the purposes of bad men? If so, how? It can only mean that He usually leaves them free till things are almost hopeless, and then raises up a prophet or

[1] Professor Larneth, U.S.A.

[2] *cf.* Prayer Book of 1549. 8th Sunday after Trinity.

deliverer to put things straight. The only way that God can really control the course of history is by influencing individuals, whether they know it or not, and whether they wish it or not; in fact by limiting their freedom. The course of history never did run smooth for very long: it has often been changed by bad men who were obviously not doing God's will. God does not always 'dispose and turn the hearts of kings as it seemeth best to His godly wisdom.'

Where then does God come in? He comes in through the prophets, seers and saints who have waited upon Him and renewed their strength by constant prayer and communion with Him. We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, inspired men and women who have leavened the lump in the past; and I believe they will go on leavening it in the future, but perhaps very slowly. *Deus patiens quia aeternus*. God is not anxious about rapid progress, but He has guided those who were able and willing to hear His voice, and some day there may be many more of them than there are now. If we take a large enough map and a long enough view I think we can agree with Bishop Lightfoot that 'history is an excellent cordial for drooping spirits.'

There is no law of inevitable progress, but if we measure it from the dawn of history to the Christian era, and again from the birth of Christ to the present day, we must admit that there has been great progress; and if we could compare prehistoric man with civilized man at his best, we should see this still more clearly. In the long war between moral progress and the cosmic process, the war between the spirit and the flesh, I am optimist enough to believe that the spirit is slowly winning, and I see only one way of accounting for it. It is that 'the spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord.' We do not obey the Christian code of ethics merely because it has been found to be socially useful. Conscience cannot be so explained. God is not Public Opinion. There are absolute values. We admire Goodness, Truth and Beauty for their own sake. But this is much older than Christianity. τὸ ζητεῖν πανταχοῦ τὸ χρήσιμον ἥκιστα ἁρμόττει τοῖς ἐλευθέροις.[3] In other words, the pursuit of commercial prosperity is beneath the dignity of free men. We are continually being reminded of

[3] Aristotle, Pol. viii, 3.

this at school speech days, but as a nation we do not believe it. Yet we know it is true. There are eternal and unwritten divine laws, ἄγραπτα κἀσφαλῆ θεῶν νόμιμα,[4] as Sophocles knew. μέγας ἐν τούτοις θεὸς οὐδὲ γηράσκει.[5] They are as eternal as God Himself. We have to account not only for the events of history, for what Man has done and failed to do, but also for his idealism; for the fact that he has seen a great light, sometimes clearly, sometimes dimly; but he knows that the light is still burning whether he sees it or not. And the very fact that he can see sin as sin, and not as mere vice, crime, or anti-social conduct, is part of the evidence for theism.

For instance, war in the twentieth century is more horrible than ever. And most of us believe in the right of self-defence. But if we think the extreme Pacifists very misguided and futile people, we must not forget their idealism. The fact that they are willing to face martyrdom, and to drag others with them into it, means that they believe in something which is not of this world. I will say no more on this dangerous topic, except to observe that within the Churches at least our ideals are the same, and they cannot be explained merely by saying that we are a nation of shopkeepers and have discovered that war does not pay. Pacifism, as far as it is a spiritual movement, is too spiritual at present for this world. Or at least it belongs to a world of which the true centre is the Cross of Christ.

Take another modern movement, the Oxford Group. Here again I speak only as a spectator, but I see in it the greatest spiritual movement of our time. Do not let us judge it by its failures. How do such movements arise? They start through individuals, perhaps one inspired man. If he fails, and is crucified or burnt at the stake, you still have to account for that one man. You have to account for an Isaiah or a Jeremiah in the midst of an apostate people. You cannot entirely explain him by heredity or education or environment. He has somehow been in touch with the Living God. He knows what it is to be strengthened and guided by a superhuman Power. It is, I am sure, a very commonplace truth to many people that God gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. The present Archbishop of York gives us an example in one of his books. He was offered

[4] Antig. 455. [5] O.T. 871.

an appointment which all his friends advised him to refuse. At 8 p.m. he began to pray about it, and by 11 p.m. he knew that he must accept it, and he did.

God answers prayer, but not all kinds of prayer. As George Tyrrell put it, God does not poke his finger into the clockwork. Prayers for 'seasonable' weather can change nothing but the minds of those who hear them. The uniformity of nature is another name for the faithfulness of God. Philosophers may question it, but in practice it works as well as ever. As a great Cambridge thinker, James Ward, wrote more than thirty years ago: 'Why *must* we assume that Nature is a connected system of uniform laws, and whence do we derive such a conception? The answer to these questions is to be found in what we are ourselves—self-conscious, self-determining individuals . . . Nature itself is teleological and that in two aspects. (1) It is conformable to human intelligence and (2) it is amenable to human ends.' This is the scientific basis of monotheism.

I come now to what is to me the most convincing evidence for God. The Spirit of God can heal and strengthen not only the spirit of Man, but also, through it, his body. I believe that I for one know what it means to be instrumental in saving life through prayer. I do not care to give details except to those who have been through something of the same kind, because such an experience is incommunicable, and I have no scientific evidence to offer. I will only say that two years ago I understood for the first time the story of Elisha at Dothan, and how the young man saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. I do not mean that I actually saw anything, but I knew it was there as surely as I know that I am in this room. Now there are several kinds of psycho-therapy, *e.g.* Christian Science, Coué-ism, auto-suggestion, and the miracles of Lourdes; and they all deliver the goods to some extent, or they would not survive long. But the power of the Living God is more than the power of the human mind. It is more than the *vis medicatrix naturae*—it is a personal power. Is God a Person? I would rather say, is God personal? Or, has God personality? If we say with Professor Julian Huxley that Man imputes his own personality to the cosmic powers, and imagines a God where there is none, we are saying that the Creator is inferior to His creation, which is to my mind absurd. To be human is to have

personality; *a fortiori* to be divine is to be either personal or supra-personal, *i.e.* to have all that is meant by human personality, and a great deal more. That is what we mean when we say that God is our Father, that He knows and loves and cares; that if He does not actually suffer He sympathizes; and that in some way He hears and answers prayer.

For myself I believe that the noble words of the collect, 'who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order,' are a picturesque way of saying that God employs spiritual messengers, either discarnate spirits or perhaps those who have lately passed on from the visible to the invisible. But at present divine voices are heard by the few. The saints are sure that God has spoken to them, but so are the insane. How can we tell when God really has spoken? Surely by telling the difference between the sane and the insane. I will quote one instance of a very sane man having a direct experience of God — James Moorhouse, Bishop of Manchester. He only told two people about it in his life-time. One of them was Canon J. M. Wilson, whom some of us remember well. He seemed to be living in another world for a fortnight, and then the vision faded. The story is told in his *Life*.

Some day the heavenly vision may be seen more often. Our physical evolution has been complete for many thousands of years, but our spiritual evolution is much slower. When our spiritual faculties have come to their full stature, which may be many thousands of years hence, we shall know more about God because we shall be more godlike. But telepathy is already a well-established fact. In America nearly 100,000 experiments have been made over a period of three years, and it has been proved beyond all reasonable doubt that some people, perhaps only a small minority, have the power to transmit their thoughts to others at any distance like broadcast speech. This may mean, as Mr. C. E. M. Joad thinks, the emergence of a new faculty, and a new level of evolutionary advance. I suggest that if a new revelation of God ever comes to this planet, it will be through some heightening of the telepathic faculty. But it does not follow that the power to communicate with God will ever be easily acquired or easily used. Human capacities vary enormously. For instance in music, one man has a sense of absolute pitch, another cannot pitch his own voice in tune, and a third cannot

recognize any tune at all. And it may always be true that 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him.' Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. 'No man can say that Jesus is LORD but in the Holy Spirit.' As the Book of Proverbs says, 'Where there is no vision the people perish,' but the vision is not for all the people. Only 'the pure in heart,' *i.e.* the single-minded, see God. But the whole Bible witnesses to the reality of the heavenly vision.

Of course I do not accept Karl Barth's theory that religion is wholly given; that it means not man's search for God, but God's search for man. Nor would I say with some that revelation is simply discovery, or the other face of the coin, and due to the quickening of man's spiritual faculties. But I think that both these views are true in a measure, or that each represents one side of the truth. 'The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord.' In Moffatt's version, 'Man's conscience is the lamp of the Eternal, flashing into his inmost soul.'

Belief in revelation is bound up with belief in eternal life; not mere survival of death, but life in God. This earthly life, as I believe, is like a speck of dust in infinite space. If we measure everything by it we are judging the First Author of Beauty by the under-side of the tapestry, and only a little bit of it at that. 'Lo! these are but the outskirts of his ways.' I have left myself no space to discuss the problem of evil, but perhaps that is a good thing. I have had my say on it elsewhere, and it would need a whole paper to itself. I will only observe in passing that for the atheist the real problem is not the problem of evil but the problem of good. We are too apt to judge men and movements by their failures rather than by their successes. And if we are pessimists we judge God in the same kind of way. But 'in all our adversity He is no Adversary.' I am quoting the marginal reading of *Isaiah* lxiii, 9, which I believe is correct and much nearer the truth than the text. As a rule, and in the long run, man makes his own hell on earth. I see no reason to doubt that God has a purpose for the world, and that He is slowly working it out through the few in every age who hear His voice and wish to be better than the world. And to wish to be better than the world is, as Hastings Rashdall thought, to be on the threshold of immortality. 'For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

THE HISTORIC JESUS

By the Rev. J. R. C. Webb, B.D., Vicar of St. Alkmund's, Derby.

MY pleasure at being asked to read a paper before this august assembly was much qualified by the at once recognized difficulty of the subject given to me. I console myself, however, with the thought that occasionally the 'rushing in' of fools may serve a useful purpose, while 'fearing to tread' is not necessarily an attribute of angels. I take it that what is required of me is that I should endeavour to indicate what may reasonably be believed about the Historic Jesus after the research of the last hundred years, after Harnack, Weiss, Loisy, Bultmann. I am to attempt to answer the question, 'Is it possible to draw a portrait of Jesus which is historically authentic?'

A nodding acquaintance with a very humble New Testament library will indicate the difficulty of such a question. A negative answer is given by Loisy and his followers. There can be no portrait of Jesus, and what has passed for a portrait is of no historic person, but is synthetic, the invention of religion. The religion of Christ invents its Historic Jesus. On the other hand the affirmative answer plunges us into a sea of difficulty. There is a Historic Jesus: a portrait can be drawn, but the portraits differ to such a bewildering extent that, to discover the genuine, presents a problem hardly less acute than that raised by the 'Synthetic School.' What are we to do with the Problem Picture of Guignebert, the Enigma of Schweitzer, the Riddle of Hoskyns, the Orthodox Dual Personality of Headlam, the Unorthodox Rabbi of Klausner, the Supernatural Socialist Agitator of Conrad Noel, and a hundred others? It is easy either to give up the quest with the 'Synthetics,' or to believe that there is a historic Jesus, but one who is beyond the reach of our portraiture, either because of a blinding supernatural light dazzling to mortal eye —this is a pernicious doctrine not discouraged by Catholicism— or because the light shed over nineteen hundred years is too dim for our seeing; in other words, for lack of evidence.

The problem is intensified by the fact that there is so much to be said for both the 'yeas' and the 'nays.' There can be no question that the organized Christian Religion did colour, did

synthesise, its historic Founder, and the process towards the Sacred Heart and the Christ of Michael Angelo's *Last Judgement* was begun before a word of the New Testament was written down. That there has been synthesis is certain. The question is, 'How far does it go?' It is unsound scholarship which finds some synthesis and denies therefore all historical ground. On the other hand there are strata in the Gospels which seem with equal certainty to bear the hall-mark of historicity. Again the question is, 'How far does it go?' And it is equally mistaken to make the mark of history 'here' stand for the authenticity of 'there.'

If the only evidence we had was but the 'bare fact' about Jesus recorded in the Gospels, even the Gospels untouched by criticism, I can see no possibility of any portrait. There is not enough evidence; not enough material. It would be admitted that if, for instance, a book was found on a remote and forsaken island containing just as much information about—here at once we can see the difficulty of New Testament study—a prophet, a teacher, an anointed one, no portrait could be drawn, and there could be no answer to the question, 'What to believe about Him?' All this is, of course, platitudinous. We all know that we have no biography of Jesus either authentic or apocryphal, and the problem set is, 'Can we see a real figure at all?' But we have more than the 'bare fact' given in the Gospel. We have other evidence. We have the whole of the New Testament, and we have the Church. Not that the New Testament, as it stands, and the Church, as we know it, are, as it were, rays reflected from Jesus so that we have only to trace them back to find Him, the Light. We find in the New Testament, and in the Church, components clearly imported from elsewhere, synthesis, but, and here is the important point, in the New Testament and in the Church we find that which can be accounted for, or at least a better hypothesis has yet to be offered, only by the supposition that there appeared in history a real and dynamic personality, Jesus. There appears to be no other way of accounting for events save by the postulation 'something happened in history.' Now this is evidence. Evidence which I propose to call 'circumstantial evidence' as apart from the 'bare fact' given. Both are of vital importance together, the 'bare fact'

as it is given in the Gospels and the 'circumstantial evidence,' the New Testament and the Church: neither is sufficient alone. There is no portrait of Jesus, there is no Historic Jesus to believe about, apart from His effect upon the world. On the contrary, severed from the 'bare fact' such as it is of the Gospels, the Christ of the Church is but another Mythra and Christianity but another mystery cult. Taken apart, the one leads to hopelessness of any real knowledge of Jesus — that is in the end to no Jesus at all, the other to a Synthetic Jesus — and that is also to no Jesus at all.

This matter of 'circumstantial evidence' does not end here. It raises the question of subjectivism — bias — in general. A purely objective study is impossible. Mark wore Marcan spectacles: and I wear mine. I cannot pretend to approach the question of the Historic Jesus purely objectively, without bias. I read the 'bare fact,' such as it is, of the Gospels in the light of the 'circumstantial evidence' of the *Acts of the Apostles*, and also in the light of my personal religion. In Him I find that 'portrait of the Living God' which gives sense to my problems of living and dying, so that I can say ἐπιστεύομεν . . . ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί. I do not believe that I am unfitted thereby to attempt to answer the question, 'What to believe about the Historic Jesus?' Indeed I would go further to assert that such subjectivity is necessary if the evidence which I have called 'circumstantial' is to be adequately evaluated. Yet this does not mean that I should not allow for this subjective element, this bias, in myself, and for that matter in all my evidence. If I may possibly make myself clear by the continuance of my metaphor — I can see Jesus more clearly because of Mark's spectacles, the spectacles of the Church for nineteen hundred years, my own spectacles; to throw them away would be disastrous stupidity, but I must remember also that these spectacles colour often and sometimes distort. I must remember that I see through spectacles and not with the naked eye.

By the phrase 'Historic Jesus' we do not mean that it is possible to differentiate precisely between the Jesus who walked the roads of Palestine and the 'Christ of experience': there is no sharp dividing line between what I have called 'bare fact' and 'circumstantial evidence.' If there is precise differentiation,

then Christian experience has no historical justification; it is but deception, however pious it may be. Rather by Historic Jesus we mean the Jesus we might have seen had we lived in the first fifty years of the first century of our era. We attempt to find the 'bare fact' behind the 'circumstantial evidence.' We endeavour to see without spectacles, not denying their value, but admitting at least the possibility of their distorting.

This brings us to a survey of our evidence. Even that which might be of the 'bare fact' order is overlaid with 'circumstantial evidence' at best, and imported foreign matter at worst. We have the Synoptic Gospels, a few scattered 'sayings' in the Epistles, the Fourth Gospel, one or two Agrapha, and perhaps there may be the slenderest tithe of history buried in the dream and nightmare of the Apocryphal Gospels. And this is all we have. Slender enough but, and here is the point of my former insistence, it is supported by a vast 'circumstantial evidence,' a 'turning of the world upside down' by Peters, and Pauls, and Corinthian dock labourers.

Then it is of the utmost importance that we should add to this evidence our knowledge of the contemporary background. It is itself, with the Gospels, evidence, but not written in the Gospels; for one thing because it was too obvious in the first century, and secondly the writers were evangelists, proclaimers of 'good news,' and not biographers. Yet for us knowledge of the contemporary background is vital. It is extraordinary that while Orthodoxy insisted against the Gnostics upon the Incarnation — the reality of the humanity of Jesus — it appeared not to realize that incarnation demands of necessity the dimension Time as well as Space. If He was a real man then He was not only within the limitations of a human body, but He was also within the limitations of time. He was a man, a Jew, a Palestinian Jew of the first century A.D. The Church was aware that the Docetic notion of a Jesus not of mortal flesh cut at the very roots of Christianity, but she has been strangely blind to the fact that to believe, for instance, in His omniscience is equally destructive. This 'orthodox heresy' may be seen still in troubled discussions about 'daemon possession,' and the conclusion that either Jesus did not believe in them but for the sake of the people accepted the common belief, or conversely, despite modern scep-

ticism thereupon, there is daemon possession, and daemons are real. If there was an incarnation at all (and if there was not, then all discussion is reduced to nonsense), then He did believe in daemons as did all His contemporaries. The greatness of Jesus, His uniqueness, lies not in His differing from His environment, but in the quality He expressed in that environment. That is why we cannot exaggerate the value of historical background. Not only does it enable us to fill in with colour the faint lines of the 'bare fact' we find in the Gospels, but it is also in the last resort the key and the only key to our interpreting our 'bare fact' — it is the language in which we hear His voice when we hear it at all.

You will have noted that I have put the Fourth Gospel apart from the Synoptics in the list of the sources of evidence. Although I am an optimistic student of the New Testament, believing that sometimes there can be seen quite clearly therein a Historic Jesus, I must confess that I look to the Fourth Gospel not for history but for 'circumstantial evidence'; its weight here is imponderable, its value to the Christian Religion priceless; but if it be set historically alongside the Synoptics, admitting that much, most if you will, of the Synoptic evidence is 'circumstantial' and that Mark is certainly a Christological treatize rather than a history book, there still can be no historical reconciliation between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. The occasional hint that in the inevitable choice between them a scholar here and there would put the Fourth Gospel first is fantastic enough to indicate the impossibility of this defence of the Gospel. I would not for a moment maintain that the Fourth Gospel is devoid of history, indeed it is at times to be preferred to the Synoptics; but rather would I warn myself here that the splendour of 'circumstantial evidence' must not dazzle me into making it evidence of the 'bare fact' order.

Form-criticism of the Gospels has not nullified the findings of Source-criticism. It has added another string to New Testament scholarship's bow. It has further analysed our Mark and Q and L and M. It is clear that while we need not deny the tradition that Peter is behind much of Mark, the Gospel is not really a collection of Petrine memoirs. There is not as it were a 'grain' in the Gospel, or what there is has been given to it

by the editor. It is made up of 'knobs' of matter (Dr. Major used the term 'beads,' but while 'knob' is a very unbeautiful word it does convey the idea of un-eveness). This is true, too, of Luke and Matthew. Even Matthew's Gospel, where a Jewish editor-author has broken apart the conglomerate of Mark and Q, still has little smoothness, the 'knobs' of tradition are there. This discovery by the Form-critics does not lessen the claim to historicity made for the Gospels; indeed it is evidence for the earliness of the basic matter, collected before these 'knobs' could be ground down to make a plaster figure. But Form-criticism bids us be cautious. We are dealing with homiletic material, which crystallized at the great centres of primitive Christianity. Preachers of 'good-tidings' are not always over-concerned with history as such. Each 'knob' of tradition wrapped in its homiletic covering needs to be examined.

From such evidence what kind of portrait can be drawn? We do not know the year of the birth of Jesus. It was probably between the years 6 and 2 B.C., although conceivably it may have been earlier: nor of his childhood do we know anything. The birth stories of Matthew and Luke have in common only that He was born of a virgin, and Luke may not be entirely consistent in this. Here the material of both evangelists is of the folk-lore order, with tales of Magi who follow a star which threads its way across the firmament, and of shepherds who see legions of angels marching down the moonlit sky. These picturesque wrappings do not necessarily make impossible the veracity of the central idea of the Virgin Birth, but if we accept what was apparently unknown to Mark and to St. Paul, then it becomes extraordinarily hard to understand the obtuseness of His mother and brothers, and His own inner struggles. Here already the stage is set for a Docetic Jesus — His humanity was but a pretending. I do not myself find great difficulty in the fact that the belief in the Virgin Birth is relatively very early and is a growth in Jewish soil and not in Greek, where of course tales of miraculous and divine nativity were common enough. Judaism, although possessing none of the Manichean ideas which made the Virgin Birth necessary to later Catholicism, possessed heroes whose coming was heralded by angelic warnings, and miracle occasioned the birth of Isaac and Samson and Samuel, as well

as John the Baptist. From this it was not a vast step to the Virgin Birth of Him Who, for Christians who held the belief, was the Messiah, a greater than any who had gone before. When we remember that despite the Cross the primitive Church still for years dreamed of a Messiah who should shatter the Heavens and ride upon the clouds, the amazing thing is that she could believe that Jesus was born at all, and many members of the Church before the days of prohibitive formulae did deny His birth.

We cannot study His development to manhood since of His boyhood we are without information. Luke's story of the Confounding of the Doctors may reflect a memory of His zeal for knowledge and His success as a *bar-mitzvah*. We can be almost certain that He was taught at the local synagogue school, that great achievement of the Pharisees. There He would have studied the Torah and the Prophets as well as the Unwritten Torah which was to become the Mishnah. There He would learn the strengths and the weaknesses of contemporary Judaism. Montifiore argues that because of the bitter attacks of Jesus upon the Pharisees it is proved that He was ignorant of Pharisaism and its greatness. There is little doubt that these attacks have been underlined by the evangelists, especially by Matthew, since after A.D. 70 there was bitter enmity between Christian and Jew, yet undoubtedly did Jesus attack the Pharisees and I should draw precisely the opposite conclusion from that of Montifiore. Jesus attacked them just because they were 'not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.' He knew how near they were to a universal religion, ethical monotheism, centred in the idea of the Fatherhood of God, while they allowed themselves, instead of giving this to the world, to be entangled in nationalistic externalism of tithes and Sabbath-keeping. The piety of Jesus was that of the Pharisees. His teaching was theirs, but His prophetic genius separated the wheat from the chaff. He was a critic from within, as are all dangerous critics and revolutionaries.

He was an artisan, familiar with the ordinary life which most men had to live, and Luke, despite his nativity stories, agrees with Mark in making the consciousness of Jesus of His particular vocation begin with the Baptism. Matthew too, although here as usual he would make the Baptism a fulfilling of an Old Testa-

ment programme (we may note that the artificiality of this 'fulfilling' notion in Matthew indicates an early stage in the dehumanising of Jesus), does not hint that the vision was seen by any other than Jesus. Thus we can believe that the artisan Jesus, who had been conscious from His boyhood of an urge towards religion and to whom the Fatherhood of God was not a mere dogma swamped in endless discussion concerning ceremonial cleanness, but a reality, was attracted by the Baptist who might well have symbolized for Him the old prophets in whom Jesus had for long found inspiration. He was baptised by him and in that act His wonderings crystallized into the conviction that He was the Messiah. A sense of vocation from youth onwards is of course not unique, nor is it confined to religion, and others before and after Jesus believed themselves to be Messiahs; but 'circumstantial evidence' has failed them. Jesus is marked out at once as above the common order not in the consciousness of His being the Messiah, but in His choice of what the Messiah should be. He could reject all the popular Messianic beliefs. He thought to be no supernatural wonder-worker, nor did He aspire to be a greater than Caesar. In the humblest Jewish estimate the Messiah was at least this, but Jesus decided to return to Galilee, a working-man preacher. Here is the quality which is divine revealed in a Jewish Messianic environment. It is no invention of the evangelists, indeed it is their constant problem that a Messiah should be such a one. We call it later the 'scandal of the Cross.'

Although Mark consists in the main of a record of one miracle after another, even this Gospel does not make Jesus primarily a miracle-worker. His concern is to spead His message as widely as possible. Mark opens the Ministry with a crowded day which ends with the vast crowd at the house door in Capernaum 'of all that were sick and them that were possessed with devils,' but he sums up the further activity of Jesus in Galilee by the sentence 'and He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee preaching and casting out devils.' He tried to win the minds and hearts of men in the normal place of the teachers of Judaism, the synagogue, until opposition drove Him to the highways and hedges. Even the casting out of daemons was secondary to this, His message.

The question of miracle in the Gospels must receive, of course, attention beyond the range of this short paper, but a brief parenthesis thereupon is justified. There can be no doubt that there remains after all criticism a miraculous element in the Synoptic Gospels (by 'miraculous' I mean that which is beyond the performance and the understanding of man *qua* man) which cannot be rationalized by any physiological or psychological knowledge, nor can it be removed save by a violence which is destructive to the entire content of the Gospels. Nevertheless we must remember that the Gospels were written in a world wherein miracle was the expected and the normal, despite that it was inexplicable. Judaism in sobriety exceeded here all contemporary religions, yet the Old Testament is full of the miraculous, and to many great rabbis miracles were ascribed. To a first century Jew, whatever his particular belief about the Messiah, whether He was to be a Davidic Prince or the Enochene Man, a Messiah without miracle was incredible. Thus the Pharisees, the recognized leaders of Judaism, ask for a sign, not here that Jesus might prove His Messiahship, since He had not yet made any such claim, if ever He did, publicly, but just to show that He had authority to speak with knowledge of the Kingdom of God. Jesus refused to give a sign; this even Mark records despite the fact that the author strings miracle to miracle. The striking fact is that the miraculous element in the Synoptics remains within bounds when we think of the Apocryphal Gospels written but a few years after the Synoptics, and Mark's 'love of a good miracle' is the strongest evidence for the reality of the humanity of Jesus which constantly breaks through the Christological treatize. If Jesus did in fact possess the power to turn stones into bread, to heal torturing disease with a word, then I cannot believe that there was real incarnation. He was not tempted at all points like as we are. The worst agony of man is his impotence — the father who cannot turn stones into bread but must watch his children starve, or when we stand by a bedside of incurable pain and can do nothing to relieve it. Here is the supreme test of faith in the goodness of God. I do not believe that Jesus was spared this test, and the record as we have it of Gethsemane makes it clear that He was possessed of no ultrahuman reserve when human resistance could endure no more.

The driving out of daemons does not present the same problem. It is not that Jesus was an anachronism performing in the first century psycho-therapy unknown until the twentieth century, but rather His was a personality which brought peace to the troubled and the distracted. The teaching of Jesus and the driving out of daemons go together as Mark puts them. The 'good-news' was 'good-news' about God. Because Jesus could tell the Parable of the Prodigal Son, He could give peace to those 'possessed with devils': if God was a Father, and such a Father, then devils might be real, but they were of no consequence (this was of course the triumphant cry of St. Paul, 'things present, and things to come, and height, and depth, and every other creature' were real enough but 'unable to separate us from the love of God'). In the same way there need be no anxiety about the Kingdom of God, 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.' The Kingdom is no mere future compensation for present woe. Because God is good it is already present, though it is still to come in its fullness as men will enter into it: the Kingdom is the *Malkuth Shamaim*, 'the Rule of God' which man must accept.

The ethical teaching of Jesus is rooted in this 'right idea of God.' The Parable of the Good Samaritan is the corollary of that of the Prodigal Son; if God is a Father then men are brethren. The whole teaching of Jesus turns upon the Fatherhood of God, this dogma of the Rabbis, which He severed from obscuring and negating externalism. Even His plea that men should 'repent' (μετάνοια) 'change their minds,' is based hereupon. Although He uses the language of popular eschatology and does not deny the current rabbinic doctrine of reward, He urges repentance not on these grounds but rather that men should 'be themselves,' that is sons of the Father-God. Again, it is St. Paul who presses home the implication of son-ship as opposed to slavery, yet it is in the Gospels. Religion does not consist of lip service and ceremonialism or in the doing of duty. This is made clear in the Parable of the Talents. The actors are servants, but approval goes to the two who are more than slaves, who use their measure of freedom and individual ability to be of greater service. The Gospels give no hint that man is evil in himself, but rather the contrary. Indeed man could not be evil

per se if God was good. The appeal of Jesus is to the good in man. His frequent approach to men was by the 'Abelardian' likening of God to a shepherd who seeks with heavy toil the lost sheep.

This message was drawn from the Prophets and their successors, the Pharisees, but nonetheless it was revolutionary. It always had been. Judaism had stoned its prophets but preserved the revolutionary teaching for which they had been stoned. That there should be conflicts between organized Judaism and Jesus was inevitable. It may be that much of the opposition of the Pharisees, the spiritual leaders of Judaism, was based upon petty grounds, but doubtless a few could see, if not yet clearly, the logical consequence of the teaching of Jesus, all the more hateful because it was mined from their own. It was the consequence which Stephen later articulated, that neither Jewish blood nor nationalizing circumcision nor the Temple were of final importance to religion. It is this conflict which is woven into the fabric of the Gospels. Herod Antipas was the cause of the oft-recurring and sudden crossings of the Lake to the safety of the territory of Herod Philip. He would be glad to win the approval of the Pharisees (who sent from Jerusalem a board of inquiry to find out about this teacher who would dare question the value of the ceremonial law, and who while setting Himself up as a teacher mixed with the '*Am ha' aretz*,' the publicans and sinners) if he could do so without cost to himself. He was, also, so hated that he might reasonably fear any popular movement, and almost to the end, for what it was worth, Jesus (who had no delusions thereupon) had the support of the common people 'who heard Him gladly.'

We can discover with no certainty the length of the ministry. It is clear that Mark, although there is a chronological order, is a 'selective' record, but the note of urgency in the Gospel points to a short public career and the three years of the Fourth Gospel is probably too long. At once He met with opposition from official Judaism. The Nazareth synagogue would have none of Him from the first. Yet there was success in the early days. His 'good news' that 'the universe was friendly' was heard with gladness. His laxity in matters of ceremonial, while He was clearly as genuinely religious as the Pharisees, tended to

give Him the favour of the Galileans, whose less strict observance of the Verbal Torah gained for their district the description Galilee of the Gentiles. The pressure of official opposition, however, was too great. Jews in any number could not be won without the Pharisees; even the Galileans looked to the rabbis for leadership; and the rabbis Jesus could not win. We hear the voice of opposition in every crowd even in the midst of popular acclamation. Jesus appears to have realized His failure. Here lies the bitterness of His attack upon Pharisaism. He was thwarted by the very men who should have been with Him. The key to the truth was theirs — from them Jesus obtained it — they would not enter in themselves nor would they allow the masses, who looked to them for guidance. But without the Pharisees He could not win the people. He was driven to concentrate upon His friends, the Twelve. When it was no longer safe in Galilee, nor profitable, He retreated to the North. The climax of this retreat is Peter's 'Confession' at Caesarea Philippi, the significance of which is driven home by the evangelists in the story of the Transfiguration. The Twelve see Him in a new light, a peer of Moses or Elijah. To describe Him there was no term left other than Messiah. What they meant by Messiah we do not know save that it was the highest 'qualitative' title they knew. For them it contained no 'theological' significance, and even the Gospels with their later Christological outlook make no change in the attitude of the Twelve towards Jesus except that, and well they might have been, they are even more bewildered by His course of action, His apparent deliberate surrender to the authorities — the Messiah, but what a Messiah! For Jesus this appears to have been the clinching of His personal certainty that He was the Messiah, but from the whole range of Messianic theory He found no 'anointed servant of Yahweh' (and in the last analysis Messiah never means other than this whether it describes Enoch's 'Man' or a King Saul) that could harmonize with His idea of God. Only the 'Suffering Servant' portrayed by the Exilic Prophet might serve to describe the Messiah of the Father-God. Again there breaks through a superb greatness, that He could dare know Himself to be the Messiah, yet such a one, against all the pressure of tradition — 'Be it far from thee, Lord.' There need

be no doubting that Christian apologetic for the 'scandal of the Cross' made use of the Isaianic prophecy, but the prophecy served this end so well just because Jesus had indeed found Himself there.

At Jerusalem He confronted organized Judaism at its headquarters. His attack upon the religious commerce of the Sadducees, who added to their universal religious authority in Judaism civil authority under the Romans in Judah, brought upon Him their hatred as well as that of the Pharisees who had already determined to make an end of Him. Theories of all kinds have been advanced to account for the motive of Jesus here — that He deliberately forced the authorities to retaliate believing that His death would usher in the Millenium; that He believed that in thus showing His hand He would rally to Himself the common folk who had come up for the festival; that at the last moment He hoped that the heavens would open and the New Age would break in upon the world. But there is nothing extraordinary in His challenge in Jerusalem if He knew Himself to be the Messiah, the Servant of God, to proclaim the 'good news about God.' In the end He had to stand for the 'good news,' the right as opposed to the wrong, in Jerusalem, the City of God. It was the compulsion known to prophets from Amos on, 'the lion hath roared, who shall not fear, Yahweh hath spoken, who shall not prophecy?' He knew that the end of it for Him would be death. I find no difficulty with the 'shadow of the Cross' which falls across the Gospel narrative long before He reached Jerusalem. Precisely because of the 'good news' He could leave the final issue as safe. His apparent failure was the acid test of the 'good news about God.' Could it stand the test of the worst wickedness of man, the Cross — the test of life and death?

The Christian religion is based upon an affirmative answer to this question. The Cross was not the end. The 'good news about God' was vindicated by the Resurrection. This is the keystone of Christianity; otherwise the Cross was but further proof of the omnipotence of evil, or the amorality of the Universe. Yet here the evidence of 'bare fact' is extraordinarily small. Luke and Matthew follow Mark, but contradict him and then divert each to his own 'appearance tradition.' This

diversion presents no great difficulty if the Resurrection was not physical. Then there is no reason why He should not appear in Jerusalem and in Galilee simultaneously. Luke, although he asserts that the body was tangible, also records that it could vanish and appear at will, and such a body is no physical body. Of course the empty tomb remains as evidence of a physical resurrection if we can accept the evidence of the three Synoptists who agree in little beyond the fact that the tomb was empty. I cannot accept the evidence myself nor do I believe that a basic story can be rationalized by the assumption that the women 'afar off' mistook the tomb on a hillside honeycombed with sepulchres. Much more likely, the disciples ran away, as indeed we are told they did, upon the arrest of Jesus, caring nothing for the tomb before because they believed that the Cross was the end, and nothing afterward since they were convinced of the presence of Jesus. I admit the arbitrariness of this, yet some solution has to be found to a problem which reaches its climax with the Ascension — which, if it is history, binds us to a three-story Universe. If we are here dealing with 'picture language' describing what the disciples came to believe, then there is no insoluble problem for me, since I believe it also. How they came to believe that Jesus was still with them we have no means of knowing. There is no difficulty in believing that it was through the normal working of the human mind, conscious and subconscious, if behind it all is the Father-God. But we have no evidence of 'bare fact.' Nonetheless we may remind ourselves that no 'bare fact' reported, no photograph, could convince us of so astounding a belief as that in the Resurrection without an enormous circumstantial evidence, and this circumstantial evidence we have.

I cannot myself believe that the qualitative achievement of Christianity is the result of a belief in that which is not true, though in the last resort the evidence for its truth is this achievement. Yet the Christian hypothesis of 'Jesus and the Resurrection' is not without the support of historical evidence — over nineteen hundred years the lines are often dim, but there can be seen One who was not only the bearer of 'good news about God' but Who was Himself its vindication, the Jesus of History.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS FOR FAITH

By the Rev. R. D. Richardson, M.A., B.Litt., Vicar of Harborne.

IN dealing with the great issues of this subject I must first try to answer very briefly certain questions which arise in the minds of those who think about it seriously.

First, can the records that we have of Jesus compel faith for those who have no faith? The answer seems to me to be, No. Where faith is not intuitive; or where the lives and teaching of those we know have not awakened it; or where joy or sorrow have not re-made us within, the records that we have of Jesus cannot *create* faith.

Secondly, can they create faith in us if our scale of values is already right, or not unduly distorted? Here, the answer seems to me, Yes. It would not be so, however, if the New Testament records had been only recently discovered, having by some miracle which contradicts their nature not made the human revolution which has kept them alive. But the facts are that they are ancient and *have* been preserved; that there is in existence a great and ever growing volume of experience which is all of a piece with them; and that there has always been an outburst of faith whenever men have gone back to them and, as it were, re-discovered Jesus.

Thirdly, should faith in Jesus comprehend the whole of the Christian's faith? Not unless he chooses to centre his devotion upon the picture of the figure of Jesus, and look upon it either as the Symbol of the Universe or as the exact prototype of every human life. If our religion is to be more than the cult of such a figure Jesus cannot be the complete basis for our faith. He was not such for the faith of the first disciples, whose faith was fixed on *God*, a spiritual being without visible representation. And true Christianity has always been a faith in God. We believe that God is revealed in Jesus, but orthodox Christianity has never believed that Jesus exhausts God. He is the mighty river, but God is the wide, wide ocean.

Fourthly, do we know enough about Jesus for Him to be truly significant for our faith here and now, in this Twentieth Century? To this question the answer is emphatically, Yes; though, to be sure, the critical position is different from what it has ever been before. We now see that Gospel history contains, even more than does other history, elements of interpretation; that the various portraits of Jesus in the New Testament are actually the presentations of faith itself, though not of faith as opposed to fact. But the valuation of Jesus which caused the records to be written was religious, and therefore we must expect the Jesus of History presented to us to be a Christ of Faith. Everywhere in the New Testament historical elements are held in solution by active elements of faith, and in a manner which forbids their mechanical separation; but in this connection 'Form-Criticism' has been a helpful discipline, as those must admit who will take the trouble to study, for example, Dibelius' little book, *Gospel Criticism and Christology*, where he shows us how in *Mark*, both in its main lines and in its colouring, history is not hidden from us; and that quite certainly, in the most primitive short paragraphs, or *pericopai*, now included in the Gospels we get very near to the living, speaking voice of Jesus. Moreover, the New Testament portrait of Jesus is multiple, and each aspect of it complementary to the others. Truth is a jewel of many facets, and it is our joy to see several facets of this, as of every other jewel, shining together, to the increased splendour of each. The significance of the portrait of Jesus then is to be found in its wholeness, in the perfect round, in the balance that it presents, even of contrasting elements. To arrive at the truth about Him we must not study the Gospels by the analytical method alone, in a vain search for an irreducible minimum of bare history. Rather, if we use the method of 'stripping,' it must only be that we may again combine.

I have spoken of the Jesus of History and of the Christ of Faith. There is a growing tendency to distinguish sharply between them. Jesus, says Charles Guignebert, was undoubtedly a historical character; but a homely, unoriginal Galilean. It was nothing resembling the Christian religion which filled His soul; *that* 'enthusiasm' was engendered by the disciples, after Peter had deduced the resurrection of his Leader from a wraith-

like shape resembling Him in the curling morning mists which overhung Lake Galilee. The New Testament, he maintains, does not introduce us 'into the historical plane'; it belongs to the literature of the quite separate realm of faith, and to that particular time in the development of the religious ideal when faith gloriously affirmed itself in the mythical story of a dying and a rising God.

I think I can enter into the frame of mind which lays stress upon the fact that this theme, already pivotal in the mystery religions, was the burden also of the Apostolic preaching; the frame of mind which feels that the actual rising to life again of an actual person who was dead and buried is a story so intrinsically improbable that faith *must* have created it: but it is really no explanation of the faith held by the disciples to say that somehow, accidentally, this theme got fastened on to an unoriginal Galilean. Were so-called ghosts unknown in those days, that the alleged appearance after death of a quite ordinary person, or even of one who had claimed, Mahdi fashion, to be the Messiah, should be considered sufficient to justify belief in Him as the long-expected Saviour of the World? The point is surely that the disciples had no difficulty in believing that Jesus stood in a unique relationship to God, because the unusualness of their Resurrection experience of Him was *congruous* with the unusualness of their experience of His life and teaching. And if it be argued, as Dr. Jacks has argued in the *Hibbert Journal*, that since Christian faith was creative enough to throw up the sayings of the Fourth Gospel, why therefore should it not have imparted the savour of originality to the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels; the answer is that the sayings of the Fourth Gospel, profound and exalted as they are, nevertheless centre in the well-known mystical ideas of light, life and love; presuppose and develop certain themes of the Synoptic Gospels; and contain nothing of the extraordinary unconventionality of the sayings and actions recorded there, particularly in their bearing on and judgment of practical life. No! The wealth of unexpected detail, in the most primitive 'units' preserved by those editions of the theme of salvation which we call the Gospels, makes clear to us the fact that in Jesus we have to do with a historical Person of profound originality and amazing depth,

whose chief significance for faith proceeds from His own religious consciousness. What that consciousness was we shall study presently. Sufficient to say now that the religious faith which then prevailed in Palestine, even among unoriginal Galileans, looked for the Divine activity *in history*, while that of those who would sever the Jesus of History from the Christ of Faith is joined to an unwillingness to recognize in any shape or form in history the Will of a Personal God. Religious faith, as Christians understand it, is not comprehended even by Loisy's beautiful definition of it as 'an effort of the whole mind, imagination, intelligence and will to break through that framework of natural conditions, apparently inescapable, by which our existence seems *mechanically determined*.' Such faith as this is an attractive refuge in depressing times like ours; but can we really shut up truth in such dualism? It is true that Reality lies beyond the world of time and space, in values which are not subject to such limitations; but these values are not detached; they are only known to us as attached to the world of fact, including personality. The whole record of history is a chain of valuations. There is no narrative, indeed no human speech and thought, apart from valuation. And the values that historians of the life of Jesus and exponents of His teaching have attached to Him are proved, by reason of the greatness of His figure, to be legitimate, indeed essential, elements in our knowledge of Him.

Fifthly, what is Faith? For a full answer to this question I must refer you to Dr. Inge's book, *Faith and its Psychology*. Among other things, he says that the proper temper of faith is 'patient, confident hopefulness and trust' in God. For the rest I will content myself with a definition by Hartley Coleridge which the Dean endorses, but which I will slightly adapt:

> 'Think not the faith by which the just shall live
> Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,
> Far less, a feeling fond and fugitive,
> Or act of will by those despair has driven;
> It is an affirmation and an act
> That bids eternal truth be present fact.

Both these senses of the word, we shall find, are applicable to the religious faith of Jesus — trust in God and belief that earth can be made the outer court of heaven.

We come at last to the essence of the question: What is the significance of Jesus for faith? It seems to me to be twofold. First there is the religious consciousness of Jesus Himself. Secondly, there are the interpretations which His Christians have given of Him. These last are required for an ever fuller, yet never complete, understanding of One Whose personality was so deep and inexhaustible that it stimulates faith continually to appraise Him.

First then, 'the mind of Christ,' the study of which is best described as the study of an overwhelming religious experience. We shall be most illuminated if we look not so much for things either new or old in what He says and does but for things which bear the stamp of an unrivalled, immediate knowledge of God. Jesus inherited a great tradition, in the strength of which He prayed and on which He evidently reflected. Thus He takes the existence of God for granted, but while He thinks of God both as Holy and as Father, He inverts the order. 'Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee.' Both elements are reflected here in true proportion. His faith is a completely unreserved trust, dazzling, daring, deliberate, which knows no defeat. And yet it is based on fact. He knows, through prayer, the God of whom He speaks; and He knows God's world and studies it; and preaches out of the fullness of both these forms of knowledge, with a rare respect for words and their meaning. Here is no example of those many pretenders to religious authority such as the 'English Messiahs' who have formed the subject of a recent book; whose flashes of insight are combined with a complete inability to relate them to the world of fact. And by His faith He brought down heaven to earth. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is among you.' Whether He used apocalyptic language or not is irrelevant: there is no practical dualism or despair in Jesus. Professor C. H. Dodd in his important book just published, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, describes His outlook as one of 'Realized Eschatology,' and if we must use the language of the Schools that phrase sums it up well. So, Jesus goes on to concern Himself with life in the Kingdom that now is. For those who live in the Kingdom, the Law of the Old Dispensation becomes secondary. Jesus brings His own judgment to bear upon it. He flouts Moses; treats

him as a man instead of a book, as I have heard T. R. Glover say. Fasting as a religious act is like a patch on His new faith; He appears to have neglected all cult and ceremony; set forth no forms of faith; made no religious profession. A sovereign Freedom reigns over all His words and actions; a sovereign Truth; a sovereign Love. He will have no pretence: 'Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' He turns the Silver into the Golden Rule, and He extends its application to women and to children. And yet there is nothing shifting, or fitful or merely changeful about Him; but everywhere, says von Hügel, there are 'energy and expansion, thought and emotion, effort and experience: joy and sorrow, loneliness and conflict, interior trial and triumph, exterior defeat and supplantation: particular affections, particular humiliations: homely labour, a homely heroism, greatness throughout in littleness. And in Him, for the first and last time, we find an insight so unique, a Personality so strong and supreme, as to teach us, once for all, the true attitude to suffering.'

The Cross, of course, is central. Either it means the final affirmation, or the final negation, of God. And that it means the former is to be seen from the existence of the Church and nineteen centuries of intense Christian living and partially successful effort to change society. If we feel doubtful we need only transplant ourselves to modern India or China; or contrast even an Abyssinian's truthfulness, trustfulness, honour and heroism with those of the man who knows not Christ. It is possible to see in the Cross itself, not the love of God but the triumph of evil over good; yet nothing else perhaps could have 'compelled' our love, and in estimating its significance we must not be blind to what of good in the world has followed from the Cross. 'Sing the story of the Passion, Sing the all-triumphant Cross.' It is an early Christian hymn, and we can still lift it on high.

In this brief study of our Lord's experience[1] the final element to be noted is that it never transcends the genuine religious consciousness. He does not pretend to omniscience: 'Not even

[1] An admirable book for the study is *The Religion of Jesus*, by Walter E. Bundy, although I do not agree with all of it and dislike its 'Americanisms.'

the angels in heaven, but only God' knows. He does not claim omnipotence: 'He could not heal many' there. Again I do not find that He presented Himself as an object of devotion; or made any public estimate of Himself — certainly not before others did so. If He allowed Himself to be called 'Messiah,' He completely changed the meaning of the title; but whether He allowed that confession or not does not matter: 'Messiah' does not describe Him, nor does any other title. He is beyond them all.

The mind of Christ, which I have here attempted to explore, has been exemplified in all ages since He lived. But in addition, as I have said, each age has had its particular interpretation of Him too, which also is significant for Christian faith. Thus there is in *I Corinthians* xv a Creed which is actually stated by St. Paul to have been the substance of the Apostolic preaching and to have been 'received' by him — not more than seven years at most, we estimate, from the date of the Crucifixion. We may make one or two Pauline additions, and it then reads thus:

> The prophecies are fulfilled and the New Age has dawned through Jesus;
> He was born of the seed of David;
> He died according to the Scriptures;
> He was buried;
> On the third day He rose, according to the Scriptures;
> He was seen of Cephas . . .;
> He is exalted at the right hand of God;
> He shall come again to be our Judge.

This Apostolic theme, the New Testament as a whole proceeds to fill out: the Gospels by dwelling on the earthly life of Jesus, St. Paul by dwelling on the Cross and Resurrection in Christian experience. But in concentrating on the earthly life, the Gospels *as they now stand*, in their final editions, have a significance of their own, in addition to making known the mind of Christ. They have become themselves a Creed, an interpretation, and they represent Jesus as a Divine Being, moving across the stage of history and performing suitable miracles, while all that He says and does is completely known to, and planned by, God; whence follows the simplicity and majesty of

the narrative, free from a single adjective, I believe, in the heartrending story of the Passion ('Jesus wiped away the adjectives from men's lips,' says Glover). One gets a sense of 'God over all.' And this has its own value for us in estimating the significance of Jesus for faith. The writers felt that, in Jesus, 'God had visited and redeemed His people.'

And how does St. Paul interpret the bare statements of the latter end of the primitive Creed? In this way. The New Age which has dawned is the age of the long-promised gift of the Spirit; and it has proved to be the Spirit of Jesus, which since His Resurrection has entered mightily into this world of 'Law' and sin and created a new Fellowship, righteous, holy, glorious, immortal. The Apostolic band has become a spirit-bearing Church. Thus there are two foci in the New Testament, the personality of Jesus and the activity of the Holy Spirit, as Canon Streeter says in his last book, *The God Who Speaks*; but yet again these two are one.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews sets out the Apostolic preaching, the 'good tidings preached to us' as he himself says, within the scheme of Platonism. In the words of a priest, though with the mind of a prophet, he proclaims that Jesus, having been 'made perfect by suffering,' became by His *death*[2] our 'forerunner' into 'the Holy Place,' that is the unseen heavenly world, which he also identifies with the Apocalyptic 'age to come.' The sacrificial cultus is thereby done away, the veil broken down which separates time from eternity, and by faith and hope Christians may here and now 'lay hold upon' the life eternal.

Similarly in the Fourth Gospel the eschatological element is refined, if not quite away. Time is the moving image of eternity, and the historical Jesus the moving image of the eternal Christ. Those who 'know Him' have within themselves 'a well of water springing up unto eternal life,' a metaphor which is the strict equivalent of the Gospel figure about 'entering into the Kingdom of God.' But this knowledge, or feeding upon Him, is the result of an ethical act: 'they that do the Will shall know'; which makes it clear that the sacramentalism of this setting of the

[2] It is to be noted that the writer does not distinguish between the Death and the Resurrection.

Christian faith is not the same as that of the mystery religions. Further, it is not nakedly individualistic; 'the fields are white unto the harvest,' and again there are 'other sheep' to be drawn in so that 'there shall be one flock.' Lastly, the whole of this is set forth as God's great plan of salvation, prepared for by the immanence of the 'Word'; that which being the life in nature at length becomes the light in men. While those who reject the light as it shone in Jesus thereby receive *immediate* judgment.

I dare not spend more time on the significance of Jesus for the men of the New Testament; nor speak of those further interpretations of Him, in terms of Greek thought, by which the faith of the Church was gradually enriched. Nor can I speak of the fresh significance that Jesus gained during the Reformation, when the Pauline conception of justifying faith was reborn, stirring such depths of religious experience as compelled men to revalue Him in terms of it. I must, however, add that alongside of these developments the Apostles' and the Nicene Creed have persisted, maintaining the outline of the first Apostolic preaching, retaining a bias for the language of mythology (which for the simple takes the place of philosophy), and so emphasizing the eschatological elements of Final Resurrection and Last Judgment. We are bound therefore to sum up the significance of Jesus for all the changing forms of faith of past centuries, briefly and essentially as follows: God, Who through the Hebrew prophets had made known His intention to redeem the world, at last entered history decisively in Jesus Christ; a new age was inaugurated which should only be fulfilled when the time-series was catastrophically ended; while in the meantime man's spiritual experience was centred in Jesus, so that according as men came to Him or not they experienced spiritual life or spiritual death — a condition on which at the Last Day sentence should be passed.

What is the significance of Jesus for faith to-day? Essentially I think it is the same as in the past; for the mythological element in the Creeds need not trouble us so long as we remember its nature, make this plain, and cease to give the Creeds that predominance in our public worship through which they are so much misunderstood. Yet I do not like the word '*entered* deci-

sively into history.' Professor Dodd, in his last two books, to which I owe much in this paper, favours the word; but I think that it savours too much of a view of a world into which God comes only from without, and that itself it needs to be considered as belonging to the language of mythology. We now think of the universe as being the result of a continuous process in which God energises continuously. Yet the fact remains that there are at times fuller emergences into history of the Divine Spirit, and that Jesus is a decisive revelation of the character and Will of God. Human thought may circle round Him, as the Bishop of Birmingham says, but it does not go past Him. It is unfortunate that the word Incarnation is historically associated with the idea of a miraculous conception; but, despoiled of that element, it alone conveys the essential thought of the uniqueness of Jesus. Again, we modern Christians see the same significance in Jesus as led our forefathers to speak of Him as the God-Man and to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity; although the valuation of Jesus in terms of religious experience now leads thinkers to find the old theological formulations of these doctrines unsatisfying. Let it then suffice for me to say that here was One, Who was truly man; Who was able so to live and talk, and be 'to the Eternal Goodness what his right hand is to a man,' as the Theologia Germanica says, that His life presents a series of Epiphanies — glorious unveilings of God.

Jesus, then, puts it beyond all doubt that there is a kinship between God and man. Thereby the intuition of them of old time that man is made in the image of God is authenticated; and the modern belief that if there is a God at all He must be immanent in the creative process receives confirmation. One aspect of the significance of Jesus is that He does away with the gulf set between matter and spirit. The world of nature is blessed through Him, the material seen clearly to be interpenetrated with the spiritual. Man, the product of evolution, is also a spiritual being. Therefore matter must itself have been spiritual in quality from the beginning. So we come to a true and wide sacramentalism.

This does not mean that the world has no need of redemption. Jesus is the Brother of all men, but as the Dean of St. Paul's said in his Presidential address, He is also their Lord.

His nature and ours are of the same stuff, but He is the diamond, we are the charcoal. The holiest of His disciples, those who have most nearly attained purity of heart, are those most conscious of their need for forgiveness. And it is to Him that we go that we may be kindled and purified, and may feel the power of God's forgiveness. Our craving for redemption should not take the form of directing our faith, as Karl Barth puts it, to the 'Word of God' that it may 'strike' us. Such faith is stark, without content; it forgets the preaching of the Gospels.

Central for us, as for the earliest disciples, are the two facts of the Cross and Resurrection; and the passing of centuries has only shown more clearly the profound significance of both. On *any* understanding of the Gospels it is clear that Jesus accepted the Cross and bore it with sublime fortitude; and I think the belief justified that He encountered it with full consciousness of what the price of His dedication was likely to be. The problem of pain, therefore, and of the often seeming-triumph of evil and injustice, receives direct illumination from our knowledge of Jesus. No intellectual solution of the problem is offered by Him, but since the Crucifixion it has become impossible to associate human pain with punishment meted out by an angry God. Jesus went to the Cross after teaching that pain has no necessary connection with punishment and that God is a God of love. The Cross was a vicarious suffering — not punishment — which continues to ennoble our human suffering.

The final interpretation of the Crucifixion is only to be found in the Resurrection which followed it. Whatever explanation we may accept of the Resurrection itself, it remains true that it shews forth in history the ultimate triumph of Good. The life of Jesus did not end with the Cross.

This manifold significance of Jesus is set forth in the Church's central act of worship, the Eucharist. There the simplest elements of human sustenance, bread and wine, are made vehicles of spiritual life; the Cross is commemorated; Redemption experienced; and for a brief moment the disciples of Jesus, united in Him, share His life in the Kingdom of God.

Can the significance of Jesus for faith be brought home to all mankind by the Church? Born as the Church was of the Cross

and Resurrection of Jesus, it will have the power to do so in proportion as it shows the consecration, the single-mindedness and the perfect loyalty to truth and love which its Lord Himself showed and demands of it. The awfulness and insidiousness of Sin are nowhere more disastrous than when self-righteousness and pride, blindness of heart and ambiguity invade the official counsels of the Church. We cannot of course follow our Lord's teaching and example literally. He taught in a particular time and place, and His teaching was in that sense contingent. Therefore we cannot mould our lives slavishly after His pattern; but we *can* drink deeply of His Spirit and apply His principles to the circumstances of our own time and place. Communion with Him, dependence upon Him, are not enough; they must bear fruit in progress on these lines. Not that we expect this world ever to be co-terminous with the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom remains a Heavenly Kingdom; but more and more men can live in it now, as Jesus taught. And the Last Day is the day of each man's final rejection of its laws and principles. Thus, the significance of Jesus for faith is such that our attitude to Him determines whether we enter the Kingdom of God and inherit its blessings, or not.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

By the Rev. M. T. Dunlop, M.A., Vicar of West Hendred and Senior Tutor of Ripon Hall, Oxford.

THE words 'spirit,' 'spiritual' are as often and as variously used as any in our religious vocabulary. Broadly, for the modern Christian, the spirit of man connotes the growing upwards, the reaching outwards of man to that which the Christian means by God. The Spirit of God, in the same terms, will be the reaching down of God to man.

God so reaching down, God as He chooses to reveal Himself, is all of God that man may know. Yet the Christian is certain that God in Himself is other and more than man can comprehend. Hence for the purposes of thought and speech, the religious consciousness is compelled to distinguish between God and the Self-revealing Spirit of God.[1] Equally, the Christian is convinced that his religious knowledge is of the one true God. The Trinitarian formula preserved both consciousness and conviction, but whether it is the best or only possible expression of these for us is another question. There would seem to be no ground for excluding from the Christian fellowship men who are dissatisfied with that formula to-day, even though they have so far none better to put forward, provided that they declare to be their own the experience it was erected to safeguard, and prove their sincerity by their way of life.

Behind the ancient controversies concerning the Holy Spirit there was a difficulty of description which is still with us. It is probably irreducible. God is conscience, the candle of reason in man, yet, so it does appear, He is fully and secretly known only by those to whom He has chosen to reveal Himself and who at His bidding speak His word. The problems which this difficulty of description creates in the fields of knowledge and authority have all along been immensely increased by the sad fact that most of us are constituted pretty definitely to see one

[1] Such a distinction, though never philosophised, is implicit in the metaphors of the pre-Exilic Old Testament, and later explicit in the mediation by the Law and by angels.

side or other of the truth. The moralist, the historian, the administrator, concerned with their general laws, are out of sympathy with the man who claims to speak on the sole authority of God's inspiration; while their labours have been viewed with indifference or impatience by a long succession of Christian people from Montanus to Buchmann.

The difficulty is inherent in theism. We deceive ourselves if we think to resolve the tension in the Old Testament between the national and universal God by coining such words as henotheism and monolatory. It is rather our business fully to recognize the tension, when such words may assist us. In the New Testament the difficulty is most evident. How are we to think of the Gift of Pentecost? If it was not new, where lies the peculiar value of Christianity? If it was new, what are we to say of the earlier religious inspiration of the men of Judah or of Athens? Was Justin Martyr wrong in claiming true inspiration for the ancient philosophers, and Tertullian, who named them Christians before Christ? Or how are we nowadays to hold, as most of us probably do, that God is revealed in all the religions of mankind, and yet uniquely and finally in Christ? Swete writes in an Appendix:

> 'The Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit in no way conflicts with the doctrine of the Spirit's world-long activity in nature and in man, while on the other hand it is seen to inaugurate a new association of the Spirit with humanity far more intimate and enduring than any which had previously existed.'[2]

This is rather a confident assertion than the conclusion of a consistent argument. Our difficulty remains. Yet both sides of the assertion may be supported by reference to the New Testament, and as a summary of its teaching the words of Swete are just. The God of the New Testament is no new God: He is Yahweh, newly and fully revealed in an historic Person whose life can be dated. The problem is the fundamental one of change, of the emergence of newness. The concept of development, applied to history, helps us nowadays a great deal; but we must be immensely careful in applying a theory of evolution, proper in the biological field, to historical phenomena, and particularly to historical religious phenomena. In religion, as in the arts, we must recognize not only development but also perfection, and patient

[2] *Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 376.

recognition of both is more scientific than construction of theories which ignore either. We may speak with some convenience as historians of a slow and gradual self-revelation of God to evolving man; yet we must have a care. In the last resort it is impossible to arrange the specific revelations contained in the books of the Old Testament in a neat evolutionary sequence, and contemporary criticism increases the difficulty. However convenient the evolutionary theory, it must not dull our appreciation of the ultimacy, the finality of the experience of a Jeremiah. Nor yet, if we are realistically-minded, will we readily conceive, as the evolutionary theory would seem to bid us, of the New Testament revelation itself as but a stage to be outgrown in a religious development whose greater fullness is perhaps in part already ours. We will be reluctant thus to approach the New Testament despite the encouragement of Tertullian and the Montanists.[3]

There is need to-day to build a comprehensive doctrine of the Spirit, a work never yet seriously undertaken by the Church. The foundation-stones are in the New Testament, and for some time to come the immediate task must be to examine these.

II.

All the documents of the New Testament agree in telling us this: a Christian was one conscious that he was possessed by, and that he possessed, a distinguishing Spirit. This is no more than to say that Christianity was a religion, an experience of those who caught it. It did not present itself primarily as a philosophy, as a morality, or as hero-worship, but as newness of inner life. The New Testament documents cover more than half a century; their testimony on this point is consistent from first to last. 'If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His' (*Rom.* viii, 9); and in one of the last documents we read: '. . . He saved us through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit' (*Tit.* iii, 5). In the Primitive Church the gift of the Spirit is religiously prior to the Christian rites;[4] prior also to ecclesiastical order,[5] while doctrine takes a comparatively subordinate place.[6]

[3] '(Righteousness) through the Gospel broke out into the fervour of youth, and now through the Paraclete it is settling down into mature life.' —Tertullian. (See Swete, *Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, p. 80.)

[4] *Acts* x. 47. [5] *I Cor.* xiii. 6. [6] *Matt.* xii, 31, 32.

Much recent theological writing has tended to obscure the primary place of the Spirit in the Primitive Church by the manner in which it has found in the Resurrection of Christ the real ground of that Church's faith. The argument runs, that the very existence of the Church is impossible of explanation unless we accept the Resurrection as a fact. It depends what we consider that fact to have been. The Pauline Churches at least do not appear to have known of a physical resurrection,[7] and even had such a fact been overwhelmingly vouched for, in itself it would have had no special religious significance for that age. It would have been but another wonderful event like the raising of the little damsel, or Eutychus. As much is true of the Resurrection viewed as a succession of non-physical Appearances. It would be playing with the evidence to deny that many in the first century, and St. Paul amongst them, had visions of their ascended and glorified Lord, and that such visions were decisive for their religious lives. But neither a resurrected body nor an Appearance has any value as religious evidence, has any conversion-power, save for the witnesses, and then under certain circumstances. 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead.' St. Paul preached the Resurrection indeed, but not as an event of the past, rather as a happening here and now. The fact and power of the Resurrection was the fact and power of the present experience of the Spirit of Christ.

> 'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' (*Rom.* viii, 11. See also, inter alia, *Phil.* iii, 10 *ff.*)

Life in the Spirit is the resurrected life, here and now. What man still awaits is the redemption of his body. If by Resurrection be meant the spiritual life of the Christian, then we may legitimately aver that the Church was founded upon it. The ground of the faith was not solely a tradition, nor primarily a dogma, far less a miracle, but this consciousness in the believer that he was of the Spirit. The existence and success of the Primitive Church necessitates we believe no more and no less than that in the first century men and women were converted to

[7] It may be that St. Paul considered the 'flesh and blood,' which cannot enter into the Kingdom, to have been changed into some 'tabernacle not made with hands.'

God revealed in Christ. As a corrective to the modern theological fashion it were truer to say that but for the Gift of the Spirit there would be no Resurrection narratives in the Gospels.

The coming of the Spirit, for the men of the New Testament, is marked by signs; those gathered together on the day of Pentecost, or the household of Cornelius, in utterance and appearance they were changed. We have to realize that to be 'in the Spirit' was not, as it often is for earnest Christians to-day, simply to take a moral and reasonable attitude towards one's fellow-men. It was, in one of its phases, less an attitude than a frenzy. Among the signs of the Spirit were trance, visions and prophecy, and ecstatic speech. These are the common manifestations of religious fervour the world over. But if they indicate the presence, they say nothing of the character of the Spirit, save they suggest it to be irrational. It is this very suggestion St. Paul recognizes as likely and refutes. The use of tongues, undisciplined by the Church and without interpretation, will lead men to think Christians barbarian or mad. Rather would he himself speak five sensible words in a Church than ten thousand in a tongue. In I *Cor.* xiv. he does not denounce what is so fervently practised; he admits to it himself, but by reasoning and irony he puts it in a subordinate place. The passage is the assured writing of one who, obviously, had never felt so much as a tension between his reasoning powers and the Spirit of Christ in him. St. Paul prayed in the Spirit and he prayed in the understanding also. He is not alone in this; he is typical of the New Testament writers. Indeed the intellectualism of the New Testament, profound in itself, is truly remarkable for an age of enthusiasm. Its pages are marked by a restraint of emotional tone, a rank common-sense,[8] that would justify an identification of the Spirit with reason in man. Yet the Spirit is not this either. Rather man's whole person, his emotion, reason and will, is to co-operate fervently with the active Spirit of God in Christ.

Again, while the religion of the Spirit is not a morality, and the law has dominion no longer, the experience of it has inevitable moral consequence. In the New Testament, love of the brethren, truthfulness, peaceableness, courage, such are the fruits of the Spirit, which may be certainly known only by its fruits.

[8] *E.g.* the donkey in a pit on the Sabbath; St. Paul on meats.

The first Christians themselves had difficulty in thinking about their experience of the Spirit as a new gift. From man's point of view it is veritably a new and fuller revelation which he has in Christ. The mystery of Christ 'in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the spirit' (*Ephes.* iii, 5), though even so, in this passage what is essentially new is that Gentiles should be fellow-partakers of the ancient promises. The emotional intensity of such an experience as that enjoyed in the First Century, whenever repeated, has always made the Spirit seem a wholly new gift. All early Christians must have been 'twice-born,' and even at the close of the period Nicodemus is told to seek second birth, although it is indicative of the change that is already coming over the Sub-apostolic Church that the advice puzzled him. Not until, and only in so far as, civilization has been Christianized is the once-born type possible. What is amazing is that we find the first company of twice-born men who made the New Testament to be so sane and spiritually modest, making no extravagant claims for their new vision, but concerned to rebuke those converts who, like some of the Corinthians, were ready to understand the gift of the Spirit as abrogating man's reasoning powers or his moral sense. The Spirit is conceived to be of the one God, eternal and universal. St. Paul is throughout concerned to assert that the Spirit has chosen out Gentiles to adopt them into the sonship of God. In *Galatians* and *Romans*, Christ was known to faithful Hebrews from the first. Again, he is not unsympathetic towards those pagan Romans who set an example to wayward Christians. He sees the Roman Empire itself as subject to the law of God, and in a famous passage speaks of the whole creation as travailing until the sons of God be brought forth. The heart of the matter for St. Paul is that the Spirit which was in Christ and is in Christian men, at an earlier time provided the Law, and at the beginning created the world and all men in it. The teaching of the Fourth Gospel is not different, only calmer and a little removed from the first ecstatic age. The Logos who took on flesh lighteth every man coming into the world. In *Acts* the Athenians are reminded of the teaching of their own poets who named them the offspring of God. Men do not change their God. The Christian, by the

gift of the Spirit, has a fresh vision of the one God which provokes by contrast a searching admission of personal unworthiness and frailty. What follows is reconciliation to the eternal God : the Jew is reconciled ; we who were afar off are made nigh. It remains that the New Testament, like the Old, conceives of God, not as a constant principle, not as a cosmic moral generalization, but as a power exerted, and deliberately, in specific acts in time, through men specially chosen. God is not a principle but a person, set upon reconciling men to Himself. Anthropomorphic language can hardly be avoided here. 'So then He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth' (*Rom.* ix, 18). Other aspects of St. Paul's teaching persuade us that this is not in real contradiction to the confidence of a later writer that God willeth all men to be saved.[9] These are complementary statements of two different truths about the one God of love. His purpose is constant, but His activity personal, not automatic. The metaphysical conundrum posed by thus conceiving of the eternal and changeless as operating at will in time must not blind us to the evidence that God does so work.

God is a personal Spirit, or better, He is not less than personal.[10] From recognition of that truth has sprung Christianity's profoundest contribution to the life of the world, the teaching of the supreme value of the personality of man. This is the corollary because the Person of the self-revealing, loving God requires independent personality to love Him in return. Origen was surely right in placing personal relationship at the heart of the universe before all time. Thus, for the New Testament, possession by the Holy Spirit, albeit momentarily accompanied by frenzy or trance, is not absorption. Man remains man, however marvellously God work in him. 'We also are men of like passions with you' (*Acts* xiv, 15). Again there is immense difficulty of description. How declare that it is God, of His power, who has come upon a man, like a rushing mighty wind, and changed him, and yet preserve the equal truth that God's Spirit in the man leaves him, so to speak, not less but more of himself? Augustine closes one door; Pelagius another. St. Paul seems to torture his mind to find words which shall present both

[9] *I Tim.* ii, 4.

[10] Thus C. C. J. Webb in *God and Personality.*

poles of the truth. 'The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit' (*Rom.* viii, 16), he cries. 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you' (*Phil.* ii, 12). The understanding is here on a knife-edge. 'I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me' (*Gal.* ii, 20).

Furthermore, for the New Testament, the dwelling-place of the Spirit is not the individual as a self-contained unit, but as a member of a fellowship. The first Epistle of St. John holds love of the brethren to be the proof of the presence of the Spirit. For the writer to the Ephesians a community of Christians is a building in Christ, and, moreover, in Christ 'each several building grows into a temple in the Lord — in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit' (*Ephes.* ii, 21-22). The teaching of the Fourth Gospel is similar. 'I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one' (*Jn.* xvii, 23). From these considerations flow consequences of the greatest importance for the Christian view of society and of authority.

The New Testament not only conceives of the Spirit as personal, but as a person, Jesus Christ. The daring of the New Testament, and its message, lie in this, that on the one hand the Spirit is God Himself at work amongst men as hitherto : on the other, the Spirit is the ascended and glorified Jesus who had walked and talked with men in the flesh. 'Now the Lord is the Spirit' (II *Cor.* iii, 7) is in context at once a reference to 'the living God' as Lord, and to the Spirit of Christ.

It seems possible that some Primitive Christians experienced the Spirit, on occasion, as a spiritualized Jesus present with them, like an additional person in a room. Such has been the experience of some very few Christians in every age.[11] It is not the Christian norm, and on a general reading of the Pauline Epistles his experience is probably better described as Christ-mysticism than as Jesus-mysticism. The Spirit is the power of the ascended and glorified Lord : it is one with the Spirit of the eternal God. It works in men, now as hitherto, as it perfectly worked in the person of Jesus. Yet here is no purely experiential religion, no theosophy. The character of Jesus, as it has been handed down in stories about Him, His life and

[11] An experience of this sort to-day is recorded in Prof. C. E. Raven's *A Wanderer's Way*.

His teaching, constitute the prototype of the Spirit incarnate by which the Spirit now may be recognized. The Spirit possessing a man might give him ecstasy or tongues, might discover itself to his reason, become manifest in his works. There was a single test as to whether the spirit in a man, whatever the outward signs of its presence, was the Christian Holy Spirit. It was so if it were recognizable for the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 'I give you to understand that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith Jesus is anathema' (I *Cor.* xii, 3). The Christian test of immediate religious experience is provided by history, which speaks to the rational and moral senses. The life and teaching of Jesus are an objective standard for Christian spiritual men, a standard of tradition capable of scientific application. The very Epistle which stresses the universal of love as the sure evidence of the Spirit's presence, explicitly reasserts this historical standard. '. . . many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God' (I *Jn.* iv, 2-3).

III.

This view of the relation in the Primitive Church between the religion of the Spirit and the religion about Jesus would by no means be generally admitted to-day. It is a question of paramount importance. There is a wide tendency to-day to abandon history. In the political world a substitute is found in propaganda; in the religious world, in myth. These two worlds react upon each other. History from which the spiritual has been abstracted is no history, but has become a meaningless chronicle fit only to provide material for propaganda. In turn, propagandist States by their power-politics render the world of circumstance so repugnant to religious men that few can resist the temptation to fly from it. Men build up an apologetic for a religion of the spirit which avows this flight.

> 'The pure essence of the Spiritual is to be found in wholly immanent activity, in contemplation, whose peculiar efficacy disturbs no single atom on earth in order to touch the heart of God.'[12]

Yet the salvation of the world depends upon the readiness of religious men to take it upon them and to change it. Such being

[12] J. Maritain, *Religion and Culture*, p. 50.

the situation, the abandonment of history by many modern Christians of intellectual gifts seems no less than disastrous. In part they turn away because much of what has hitherto passed as Christian history is dissolved; in part, because history critically read does not support institutions and beliefs which they hold dear, and, with some, pretentions they will not relinquish; but chiefly there is a predisposition of mind natural to the age. Is Christianity an historical religion or not? The issue is wide in its consequences, yet must be decided in a special and comparatively narrow field. Did Christianity spring from a person, His life, death and teaching; did it first grow to be recognizable as a specific religion, governed by an historical impulse at its root? Or did it originate only in experience not of this world? Had the New Testament communities an historical tradition which they prized as authoritative, from which in part they drew their inspiration and by which they verified it, or had the Spirit in them none save the verification provided by their intense experience of it?

Do we desire to renew and verify our Christian experience, we naturally turn to the Gospels. But not only had the first communities no written Gospel, it has long been recognized that the Gospels, in their greater part at least, are the productions of the early communities themselves. In principle this has been allowed by those who have written with authority of the Holy Spirit.

> '. . . The Master confided His Gospel to the free and living preaching of His disciples and the assistance of the Spirit; . . . the tradition grew daily richer by what each had learned and related of the "deeds and words" of the Master.'[13]

Swete is a little more cautious.

> 'The Spirit not only recalled our Lord's words, but revealed heights and depths in Him hitherto unsounded . . . It was in some sense a new Christ that the Church came to know after the Pentecost . . . '[14]

Nowadays New Testament criticism adds to the difficulties in two ways. Both Sabatier and Swete presumed there was an authentic oral tradition of the Life and Sayings, treasured in the memory of the first Christians, which provided the stock upon which all else in the New Testament has grown. More recent

[13] A. Sabatier, *The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, pp. 45-6.

[14] Swete, *New Testament*, p. 313.

critics are agreed that this original stock was much smaller than was commonly supposed half a century ago, but some, if they do not flatly deny its very existence, at least do so for all practical purposes, understanding the first tradition of the Life to have been only an account of the death, together with some record of the Appearances of the Risen One. As for the earliest tradition of the Sayings, this has been so worked over by the first communities before it reaches its present form in the Gospels, that it is now impossible to distinguish the creative Jesus from the creative missionaries of the Primitive Church. If the historic Jesus be there, He is transfigured into dazzling but colourless light and we cannot see Him. Thus, it is frequently asserted of St. Paul that his Christ was purely a Christ of experience, his Jesus no more than the crucified figure necessary to his soteriological dogma.

Now the basic thesis of the extremists must amount to this, that the first makers of the Christian tradition had no knowledge of a history of Jesus to act as their inspiration and guide, because had they known of such a history they would consciously have preserved it; rather they were creating myth for the needs of their converts, and their myths are the stuff of the tradition. The question here is not whether the forms of the Sayings of Jesus, their story-settings, and their context of place and time, are the work of the communities. This may be generally allowed. The question is whether or not these first communities, while assuredly 'Spirit-bearing,' knew of a history, preserved it, based their spiritual life upon it, and checked and controlled the manifestations of the Spirit by reference to it. In the New Testament, is the religion of the Spirit an historical religion or not?

Secondly, modern criticism is showing, and convincingly, that many of the Sayings in the Synoptics or elsewhere are Sayings uttered in the name of Jesus by prophets of the Primitive Church while ' in the Spirit.' The prophets, or some of them, were on occasion, as we would put it, mediums controlled by the departed and glorified 'Spirit of Jesus' which spoke through them.

According to Swete, the Spirit recalled the Lord's words and gave power of interpretation.[15] Sabatier suggests the more modern view.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 313.

> 'All those who knew or believed that they knew something about Christ, all those that had received or believed that they had received some heavenly revelation, brought their gift to the common treasury.'[16]

To-day it must be allowed the case is made out for the use by New Testament writers of 'Spirit Sayings' of Jesus. We must read in a sense other than Swete's those enigmatical words of the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel.

> 'These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. . . . I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself. . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you' (*John* xiv, 25-26, and xvi, 12 ff).[17]

There is here, it would seem, an apologia for the Sayings and teaching of Jesus received 'in the Spirit,' and the Fourth Gospel appears as a reconstruction of the historic Life and teaching, at least partly in the light of what has been received 'in the Spirit,' up to the close of the First Century. As much is true of a great deal in the Synoptics, though their literary method is not that of the Fourth Gospel. Possibly the key to it all is in the verses in *Revelation*, '. . . for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophesy' (*Rev.* xix, 10);[18] 'I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the Churches' (*Rev.* xxii, 16). If the growth of revelation received 'in the Spirit' were checked by reference to Christ, as from the Pauline and Johannine Epistles we know it was, and if what was known of Christ was itself received 'by way of revelation,' then, although we may grant that Jesus actually lived, the true fount of Christianity, and the sole authority for it, is the Beloved Community, the recipient of the revelations, and Christianity originates and continues outside history, moving on some wholly other plane of experience.

Against such a view there must be put the general impression conveyed by the New Testament as a whole, which presents its records and teaching as historical. Moreover, a detailed study

[16] Sabatier, *Ibid.*, p. 46.

[17] See also *I Jn.* ii, 27, '. . . his anointing teacheth you concerning these things.'

[18] Canon Green so treats this verse in his commentary on *Matthew* (Clarendon Bible), p. 264.

of the New Testament accepting modern critical methods does not necessarily support either those who would diminish the historical to a point, or those who see history and interpretation of it 'in the Spirit' as inextricably fused. On the contrary, it can be shown that throughout the New Testament its writers distinguish between the historic tradition concerning Jesus Christ, and the revelation, from Him and about Him, received in the Spirit.

First, what is the character of these Sayings of Jesus received in the Spirit? Many have significance only in the special circumstances of those who heard them. In this class may be placed the Saying on the Damascus road, or the commands and prohibitions by which the Spirit of Jesus directed the itinerary of St. Paul and his companions, according to *Acts*. Such Sayings have no interpretative influence on the tradition, and need not here be further discussed. Secondly, many of them, as Swete said for them all, are interpretative, for instance, the interpretations of His own teachings put into the mouth of Jesus. Thirdly, the great majority, if not all, of these Sayings have meaning and relevance only for the last period of the Apostolic Age. This is borne out by their absence from the Pauline Epistles. The Spirit saith expressly what shall be in the later ages.[19] A great number of Synoptic Sayings which are unintelligible if regarded as spoken by Jesus in Galilee are charged with profound Christian teaching if read as relevant to the conditions which obtained amongst the Christian communities at the opening of the second century.

It is this last consideration which makes the designation commonly given to these Sayings in the Spirit, namely, 'Post-Resurrectional Sayings,' either meaningless or misleading.

The recognition of Spirit Sayings of Jesus suggests reflections, leading to one conclusion. In the first place, so far as these Sayings were interpretative, for instance of a teaching, there must have existed tradition with teachings to interpret. Again, the fact that most, perhaps all, of these Sayings belong to the later years of the Primitive Church, compels the presumption that the Church had authoritative teaching of another kind to nourish it in the first decades. The Pauline Epistles provide negative and positive evidence that this was so. Two other con-

[19] *I Tim.* iv. 1.

siderations may be here adduced. There could have been no point in the later Christian prophets attaching the name of Jesus to their sayings in the spirit unless His Sayings, and tradition about Him, already existed and were universally regarded as authoritative. From this angle, the burden of the passages quoted from the Fourth Gospel is that the new spiritual teachings are but further Sayings of the same Lord who spoke in the flesh: they are to be accepted because harmonious *addenda* to the tradition, and their authority is that of the historical tradition itself. Lastly, there is the slight evidence of opposition to this prophetic Christianity. That provided by the *apologia* in the Fourth Gospel is supported by *Matthew*, if Kundsin be right in reading xii, 31-32, as signalizing a movement from what he calls 'the Son of Man Dogma' to a doctrine of the Holy Spirit.[20] Evidence of opposition to a later prophetic Christianity is also evidence for an historical tradition in the First Century well known and jealously guarded.

The prophetic purpose was to add to the historic tradition further teaching, mainly in the form of Sayings, to meet the changing circumstances and needs of the Churches. When the hope of an immediate Second Coming had died, and men had at last to face a situation not wholly covered by the historic tradition, the prophets 'in the Spirit' provide new Sayings of Jesus for new situations. Many of these Spirit Sayings were later written back in the Ministry of Jesus and incorporated with His earthly utterances. The years 90-120 are suggested by the evidence of the Fourth Gospel and of the Epistles for this prophetic activity under the aegis of the Church, and during this period *Matthew* is being written, and *Luke* perhaps is taking its final form.

It is in the Pauline Epistles, which together form a towering theology of the Spirit still unscaled by us, that there lies our best evidence for the existence in the first century of an historical tradition, even an exactly known tradition, concerning the Person, the teaching and the death of Jesus. If St. Paul be one of the most spiritually-minded writers in the New Testament, he is also one of the most historically-minded. His deepest convictions are twin-rooted, in experience and in history. Again and

[20] Kundsin in an essay in *Form Criticism*, trans. by F. C. Grant, p. 129.

again he refers from his personal insight, and from that whether come by in the body or out of it, to history for its confirmation. And for him the chapter of history whose reading illuminates the whole, is the history of Jesus. His writings bring us to that nexus of experience and history which is the distinctive and radical element in the Christian doctrine of the Spirit.

Scattered throughout the Paulines there may be a few direct references to the Sayings of Jesus, and more possible reflections of the teaching. But the Epistles do not set out to preach the Gospel of Christ from the beginning, and it is strong evidence for the existence from the very first of a body of the teaching of Jesus, that the Gospel which had been preached included a moral teaching given with the authority of Jesus. 'Ye received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God—for ye know what charge we gave you through the Lord Jesus' (I *Thess.* iv, 1-2). But it is in St. Paul's handling of his Churches' problems, which called forth the Epistles, that we find our clearest evidence that he knew a tradition of the teaching of Jesus and about Jesus. To this tradition he appeals in every great crisis.

Christians are men upon whom the End of the Age has come, yet, unaccountably, time passes and men die before they have seen Christ come again. These deaths not only grieve, they puzzle and agitate the Churches. In the course of his answer to the Thessalonians St. Paul consoles the mourners with a declaration, given '*by the word of the Lord*,' that at that last day the living should not precede the dead (I *Thess.* iv, 13). The Corinthians have raised this and other cognate questions. St. Paul prefaces his answer by reminding them of what can only have been a portion of the tradition which he has received and taught, and he may well imply he received and passed it on word for word; that is, he had learnt it by heart (I *Cor.* xv, 1*ff*).[21] To the Galatians St. Paul protests the genuineness of his mission to the Gentiles. He had it 'by way of revelation,' but as if aware that a revelation vouchsafed to one man is of no necessary consequence to another, and proves nothing, he pleads as his twin-authority the confirmation of his mission not only by Cephas, but also by James the brother of Jesus, and at a later date by John and the parent church of Jerusalem. His Gentile

[21] See Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, p. 18*ff* (English Trans.).

Gospel, he would say, is derived from as near the fountain-head of the tradition as it is possible to reach after the death of Jesus, and he is vehement that such was one of its sources. 'Behold before God I lie not!' The whole passage, it may be added, would seem to be decisive evidence for the universal character of the teaching of Jesus (*Gal.* i). Lastly, we may cite St. Paul's answer to the problem created by the mixed marriages of the Corinthian Christians (I *Cor.* vii, 8 *ff*).

He begins by reminding the Corinthians that concerning marriage they have the teaching of Jesus Himself. 'But unto the married I give charge, yea, not I, but the Lord.' Husband and wife are not to separate. He then goes on to deal with the situation that has arisen in Corinth and which Jesus could not have envisaged. Concerning it he, Paul, '*I, not the Lord*,' advises that a Christian shall let an unbelieving spouse depart if that spouse be determined to go. Clearly, St. Paul here is conscious of moving outside the teaching of Jesus to meet a situation which that teaching did not cover. But this means that he regards the teaching of Jesus as defined and complete. In a word he regards the teaching historically. It is this very historicity of the teaching of Jesus which allows St. Paul to legislate himself for new times and new problems. He legislates in the spirit of the teaching of Jesus, to use the word in the modern sense, and makes no loud parade of his own authority: 'I think that I also have the Spirit of God' (I *Cor.* vii, 40). It is in the spirit, not in the letter, that there is life. The form taken by the Spirit in the teaching of Jesus is historically relative to Jesus' own day, yet the Spirit of Jesus is known not only by way of revelation, but also by learning the historical letter of His teaching. The historical tradition having enkindled its Spirit in St. Paul, he is free, in the liberty of the Spirit and by its present help, to deal with the Corinthian situation. 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' The overwhelming force of this historico-spiritual conception in the mind of St. Paul is the more apparent when we remember that, expecting as he did a near end to all earthly conditions, he must have regarded the Corinthians' problems as transient ones which, had any other conception been his, he might well have ignored.

In this passage the nature of the authority of tradition under

the Christian view is very plainly discovered. It is dynamic, bringing about action within our own circumstances, unique to us, in loyalty to the Christian tradition. The form which the Spirit assumes in one age, having become traditional, serves not as a mould for later ages, but its function is to enkindle in a later age its own spirit, which shall then assume its own form, this in turn eventually, and coral-wise, to be precipitated as the latest stratum of the tradition. Tradition, and interpretation of its spirit for new circumstances, these go hand in hand throughout the New Testament. In the age of the Synoptics the interpretation takes the form of Sayings of Jesus in the Spirit, but these are added to the Historical Sayings, not substituted for them. Early sources are at once reverenced and amplified, even corrected. Tradition and interpretation play one upon the other and the body of the tradition grows, yet the distinction between the historical and the spiritual is never lost sight of, but constantly brought to the minds of the first Christians, sometimes sharply, by the writers of the New Testament. This is as true for the close of the period as for the first years. 'He that hath not the Son, hath not the life' (I *John* v, 12). The tradition is given fixed forms, determined no doubt by the Primitive Church in the light of its worship and to meet its needs, but also the forms are intended to preserve what had been received. Just as St. Paul refers the Corinthians to his precise tradition, so at the end of the century Christians are exhorted to 'hold the *pattern* of sound words.' They are to hold it in the Spirit. 'That good thing which was committed unto thee, guard through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us' (II *Tim.* i, 13-14). The next age, by creating the Canon, was to keep clear this same essential distinction between historical and spiritual which is the condition of their fruitful interpenetration. The modern cult of the spiritual as against the historical, the rational, the institutional, is an old futility, condemned by the New Testament, as foolish as imagining that one extols religion by disparaging theology. Historian and critic have an essential function in the religion of the Spirit, to recover and present the tradition which conveys the same Spirit to each successive age. We must reckon with, and be thankful for, not only the inspired Beloved Community of the First Century, but also the life and teaching of an historic

Person recorded from the first days by the community, and in both community and record the same Spirit dwelt.

IV.

The Christian does best to describe the Spirit of God, but then inadequately, as personal. The records of its working are the material of history. It is a Spirit no narrower than the spirit of man, no wider than our personal experience. Such is the teaching of the New Testament. Could we be rid of that, the difficult of describing the Spirit would be eased. But we would not be rid of it. The Christian, let us admit it, does not look inwards from the world upon the New Testament; he stands as one transfigured by the power of the New Testament, a new creature, looking outwards, and he perceives in the world the Spirit of God which he found in those pages, the Spirit of Christ, always and everywhere active.

The man of the Spirit is at once certain and diffident of his knowledge and moral judgment. Certain, because none other than the Spirit of God informs his reason and his heart; diffident because — it is the fundamental admission — he constantly recalls the frailty of these vehicles of the Spirit. They could only cease to be frail on ceasing to be his own, and his capacity to err is the condition of his independence. The Christian will go to the stake for what he believes, but modestly, for he may be wrong and the flames will not make him right. His devotion to his vision of the truth is like the devotion of the lover in the old song, whose maturity and good sense are as evident as his passion, to the beauty of his mistress.

> I have seen many that have beauty,
> Yet is there none like to my lady,
> As ever I saw.

According to the New Testament the Spirit dwells not in the isolated individual, but in a community of persons. Moreover, the manifestation of the Spirit, always in history and never as contrary to reason, is a manifestation in men's intercourse one with another. Here may be securely grounded society's right to be; its institutions, its laws. It shall be in essence a fellowship of men and women, in the Spirit of Christ, in which is the continuous and growing tradition whose source was the historic

Jesus, a fellowship which bears here and now the fruits of the Spirit. Rank and grade it may have, but these are of men's creating, and for their convenience. Authority it must have, as guardian and interpreter of the tradition. Its authority will be that of reason and history, and the moral sense, by which things the tradition is rightly known and its spirit appreciated. It will be an authority exercised by men whose way is that of Jesus, whose purpose in directing the community is to promote, not stifle, the persons of the sons of God, and who in all their judging remember the inexpressible mystery of the Spirit in whose name they must speak and act.

In the Christian doctrine of the Spirit this age may yet come to find sure ground for its social life, and set up societies which shall be neither atomistic collections of individuals, cowardly Leviathans, nor imitations of the beehive, in which personality cannot breathe. Whatever the outward forms such a society assume, in its inner structure it will be at once an *ecclesia* and a democracy: a society of persons equally called of God. Then will adult men and women be able once again passionately to believe in society. Only such a society, with a power of faith within it, will ever challenge, overcome, convert those arrogant organizations of prisoners of the mind which to-day, while we speak, are sweeping from Europe its heritage of law and liberty, religion, learning and art. The highest spiritual calling in this age is the endeavour to preserve and create communities of men possessed of the free Spirit of God once seen in the face of Jesus and which, shed abroad in our hearts, gives us to cry, Abba, Father!

THE CHURCH IN WHICH WE BELIEVE

By the Rev. H. P. Kingdon, M.A., Fellow and Chaplain of Exeter College, Oxford.

ARCHBISHOP Temple is reported to have said: 'I believe in One Catholic and Apostolic Church, but I am sorry to say that it does not yet exist.' We should all, I suppose, endorse this statement. But to what extent the beliefs of each one of us about the Church coincide is much more open to question. As our President said last year, 'there is a great need for the thinking out of a Modernist conception of the Catholic Church.' In these days of organized secularism that need becomes more and more urgent. And on this topic especially it seems to me desirable that we should agree as much as possible both among ourselves and with those who stand near to us, so that our thought may result in concerted action before the opportunities before us to-day are lost and gone.

'Catholics' have tended to stress the visibility, and Protestants the invisibility (which practically means the non-existence) of the Church. The latter have even sometimes gone so far as to deny that Jesus, in His expectation of an impending end of the world, founded anything in the nature of a society, or that He intended even as much organization as what has been called the 'pneumatic anarchy' of the Apostolic Church. But it has recently been maintained by Professor C. H. Dodd in *The Parables of the Kingdom* that the genuine Apocalyptic teaching of Jesus refers not to one catastrophic event in the future, but to a series of crises which come upon men now here, now there, and often at an hour when they think not; that it was a later tradition that introduced the explicitly eschatological parables, and wrongly referred the parables of growth (such as the Sower) to the Second Coming which contemporary Apocalyptic had led them to expect. It was the partial presence of the Kingdom in the world which led to the crisis of personal decision and to the judgment on which Jesus Himself laid stress in the genuine apocalyptic of Mark and 'Q.'[1] In that case we need no longer eliminate this

[1] Compare the 'realised eschatology' of the Fourth Gospel.

apocalyptic teaching in order to believe that the acceptance of the kingship of God was not simply a private affair between the individual and his Creator, but resulted in a new, and in some respects, a revolutionary attitude towards society. What Jesus left was not indeed 'an organized society with constitution and rules . . . but it was a group of disciples united to one another by their common allegiance to Him. It was a living fellowship.'[2]

Here surely was an embryonic church, which grew naturally into the organism described and propagated by St. Paul. To my mind the significance of the fact that the word *ecclesia* (so common in *Acts* and the Epistles) occurs only in two highly suspect passages in the Gospels, is not that Christ founded no Church, but rather that *His* Church was something far more comprehensive than the *ecclesia*, or congregation, of Israel. For *His* Church did not exclude Gentiles and Publicans, as seems to be the case with the Church described in *Mt.* xviii, 17, nor was it founded upon so shaky a rock as Peter proved to be until after the resurrection, Peter, who is always addressed as 'Simon' by Jesus in the Gospels, except in one case where St. Luke is paraphrasing St. Mark.[3] The Ecclesia of Israel was an 'established' hierarchy influencing the life of a particular nation; the Kingdom of God was at once wider and more exclusive: it was not confined to any one nation, and it demanded a righteousness which exceeded that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

We cannot of course go back to the spontaneous society of the Gospels. Even Dr. Buchmann's Group Movement now has as varied a hierarchy of leaders and 'team-members' as had the Apostolic Church, and if it is to continue to spread and maintain anything like a common character, it will need an increasing organization. We may even regret that the early Church had not a more definite constitution. For then it might not have fallen so easy a victim to the sacerdotalism of the 'Mystery Cults,' and become no longer the 'salt of the world' or the leaven at work among mankind, but a private society for the saving of men's souls in a promised life after death. And many who strained eagerly to save their souls lost them amid a welter of magic and

[2] Archbishop Temple, quoted in the *Modern Churchman,* July, 1936, p. 175.

[3] *Luke* xxii, 34, a paraphrase of *Mark* xiv, 30. 'Simon' does not, like 'Peter' and 'Cephas,' mean 'a rock.'

superstition, leaving behind a tradition which has led Canon Barry to say :[4] 'The one really formidable argument against the truth of the Christian religion is the record of the Christian Church . . . To many faithful disciples the word Church and the word Christianity seem to stand for two different things.' Small wonder that Tyndale in his translation of the Bible, replaced the word 'priest' by 'senior,' and 'Church' by 'congregation.'

And yet it would be disingenuous for us not to claim that, since Tyndale's day, the ideals which have governed the Church of England and many of the Free Churches who share our common tradition, have come nearer, despite our practical shortcomings, to the spirit of Christ than have those of most of the Churches that make bold to use His name. In our Anglican tradition there is much that we can legitimately be proud of, much that calls for our best abilities to maintain, and much that testifies to the true grace of God. But, although the sad fate of religion in Italy, France, and Germany, as compared with the relative healthiness of the Churches in *e.g.* Sweden and Holland, seems to shew that a National Church is in the end a stronger guardian of the faith than a rigid international machine, we cannot afford to be insular. We do well to remember that we are but a small part of 'the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world.' The actual identity of all the true followers of Christ as God knows them would, if it were revealed, startle our sacerdotalists and probably even some of the unwitting members of that congregation themselves. Though it is for us to do all we can to reveal this identity, to find a body for the spirit, we cannot read men's hearts. We can only roughly define the conditions of membership of the true Church. And those conditions will surely be concerned more with the practical attitude towards life, especially with the will to love God, as revealed to us in Jesus, and our neighbours (including people at least as doctrinally remote from us as the Samaritans were from the Jews) as much as we love ourselves. A vision rises before us—in the historic words of Lambeth 1932—'of a Church, genuinely Catholic, loyal to all truth, and gathering into its fellowship all "who profess and call themselves Christians" within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith

[4] F. R. Barry, *The Relevance of the Church* (Nisbet, 1935, 7/6), pp. 46-7.

and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole body of Christ.' So surely the Church in which we believe will include not only those liberal members of Christian congregations as really live up to their professions, but many others whose hearts are sound though their heads may be hampered by outworn theories, and whose devotion to the Christ of the Gospels exceeds the inadequacy of their theology. It will include those who worship God in simplicity and silence as well as those who seek Him with the most elaborate ritual. It will embrace representatives of various types of Church-order and belief, including some Roman Catholics and some Unitarians.

It would be presumptuous to define the exact limits of this congregation of faithful people. Limits of course there must be. A superficial syncretism would soon lead to self-contradictions. But the decision as to the limits can surely be left to the borderline cases themselves, as they look towards the centre. You cannot draw the circumference of a circle unless you know where the centre is. It is the quality of the core that matters. And history shows that big movements are usually initiated by a small nucleus. So before speaking of our relations with other churches and with the world, I propose first to touch briefly upon some points that particularly concern ourselves.

Speaking as one of the younger members of the Modern Churchmen's Union, I am sure that we can never repay the debt which we owe to our seniors, both those who are no longer with us, and those for whose continuing guidance we can still be thankful to-day. The battle for intellectual freedom, within limits which we can gladly accept, has been very largely won. All we need to do is to keep watch against counter-attacks, and to pass on the news of that victory and the fruits of the scholar's study to the pulpit, the pew, and the parlour. But for this victory, many of us could never have inherited the legacy which is our's to-day. It is for us to preserve it, and to enlarge it, for our sons. But some of us feel that the time has come to pursue more vigorously the less purely intellectual aims of our Union, namely, to 'promote the application of Christian principles in public as well as in private life' and 'to secure more regard for beauty and truth in Church Services, and the use of language and customs

in harmony with modern thought.' For reason is not the whole of religion. As Professor Macmurray has pointed out, we need a rightness of emotion as well as of thought. And we need to think out, and to practise, what we mean by Christian charity in relation to modern problems, perhaps especially in that branch of ethics which concerns the use and distribution of money, far more than we do. For the real 'bond of peace' which is a *sine qua non* of the centre of any Church is not a common intellectual position, but good-will. Especially in a society which allows so much divergence of opinion as ours must do, any lack of good-will among ourselves or towards others will destroy all the value of our constructive thought.

It should often be possible for those who disagree in the intellectual expression of their beliefs to unite in the use of common forms of art. Thus both 'Catholics' and Protestants have been able to use the Anglican Prayer Book, and, still more widely, the same buildings and the great music of Bach. Dr. Percy Dearmer, whose death we so lately and greatly lament, even goes so far as to write :

> 'The chief expression of charity must be through the various forms of art, as, indeed, its highest and most permanent expressions always have been; the brown tomes of theology repose on the shelves, the long sermons are unread; but the architecture, the painting, music, poetry, endure and are loved.' [5]

As to architecture, we can thank our ancestors, though not so much our immediate fathers, for a goodly heritage. But in the matter of internal decorations and vestments, 'ecclesiastical art' has a bad name. We suffer much from a tasteless commercialization, and we need a new reformation, to which Thaxted and Liverpool Cathedral are pointing the way. We cannot expect to unite except at a high level. So too with music. We can be content with nothing but the best — by which I do not mean the most pretentious or highbrow, but the best musical expression of which the several congregations are capable. The chief reason why people quarrel so much about hymns is that so often either the music or the words are bad. The worst of these should be quietly withdrawn from circulation, so that no one may have a chance to like them, and thereby undermine the charitable feelings of those who have better taste. This matter is too im-

[5] *Our National Church*, p. 91.

portant for us to be soft-hearted about. Mr. Gladstone said that he would not mind leaving politics if he could choose the hymns of the nation; and as it is, the Church probably loses as many good members from the maudlin sentimentality of some of its music as from the irrationality of some of its beliefs. In *Songs of Praise* Dr. Dearmer has shown us how rich a treasury of Hymnody is ours. It should be our duty to popularize this music, especially among the young. And there is still room for other new hymns and chants. In the Elizabethans and Vaughan Williams, not to mention those we have already adopted from abroad, we have religious composers of the first rank. But most of the best of our modern music has lost touch with the Church, whilst we are all too often content with slip-shod renderings of fifth-rate music. I do not wish to plead for more intolerance of the other man's music, but rather for an unobtrusive improvement of taste. Plato knew what he was about in banning all but the two purest modes from his state, and God calls for the very best that is in us.

So too with the spoken part of our liturgy. It is said that Robert Bridges was not consulted in the 1928 revision of the Prayer Book. We must have a new book. But we cannot be content with hack-work from the episcopal bench. We cannot hope to match the language of Cranmer and the seventeenth century unless we draw upon the best liturgical and poetic talent. Meanwhile Parliament's very reasonable rejection of the 1928 Book and the Bishops' subsequent decision to regard it as 'a standard of divergence' from the 1662 Book have led in practice to a considerable freedom of liturgical experiment, of which we must make full use. Let us not forget that Tractarian priests went to prison for customs which are the general rule in our Church to-day. One thing seems clear: we shall never get the new book which we so badly need, unless the parties can agree as to what they want. All schools of thought must make up their minds as to how much divergence from the central norm can be allowed. For instance, Modernists and Evangelicals should earnestly ask themselves whether the sanction of a carefully limited reservation — for the sick and even to extend the corporate atmosphere of the Communion into private meditation — and Anglo-Catholics in their turn should consider whether the

permission of far wider deviations from obsolete traditional phrases than was given in 1928, would not be more in accordance with reason and Christian charity than to object to these claims on the lines of the old party-strifes. There is a new desire for rapprochement afoot. I will mention one example among many. This is the growing tendency to make the chief Sunday morning service a Choral Communion at a time when whole families and servants are free to make their communion together. Surely the Communion Service, which seems to us to call for less revision than any other, especially with the devotional atmosphere of the music to overshadow those few phrases that we could wish otherwise, is most fitted to be the central, as it is the most dramatic act of Christian worship.[6]

But is it too much to hope that the next revision of the Prayer Book will take place with the co-operation of those who now use no more than excerpts? To anyone who has felt the satanic power of the semi-secularized State-Shintoism of Germany and Italy — and apparently it is the same in Russia and Japan — and to anyone who has seen the self-sacrifice and idealism which these false gods evoke, and the extent to which the humanism of Walter Lippmann has taken over the Christian virtues discarded by the Churches, the need for re-union and reformation is desperate. In the light of this necessity the straw-splittings and bickerings of our ecclesiastical introverts, and the indifference of their congregations, are more than a matter for jesting or unconcern. True, the Bishops in 1920, by recognizing unreservedly 'the spiritual reality of the ministries of those Communions which do not possess the Episcopate,' as being 'manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace,' and by encouraging the occasional invitation of Free Churchmen to preach in Anglican Churches, gave a lead which sent a thrill through the Christian world. But, alas, thanks largely to the ignorance and apathy of the average congregation, that lead has not yet been properly followed up. Professor Raven writes :[7]

[6] Such a service will of course differ markedly from the Anglo-Catholic 'Choral Eucharist,' where the congregation are largely spectators. But it has proved acceptable to Anglo-Catholics as well as to 'Broad Churchmen.'

[7] *The Church and the Twentieth Century,* ed. G. L. H. Harvey, p. 204 (Macmillan, 1936. 15/-).

> 'The opportunity and the inspiration were dissipated in years of debate: and by the time of the Faith and Order Conference at Lausanne in 1927 Anglicanism had revived its interest in legalism and argumentation. In 1930 the next Lambeth Conference, though compelled by the situation in South India to renew something of its former faith, was in regard to reunion at home cautious and retrogressive, confining its report to a stilted and self-conscious defence of Episcopacy as a trust to which it must at all costs be true . . . Whereas in 1920 the Church of England seemed ready for adventure, it has now reverted to a contented acceptance of its position as a "bridge,' ignoring the fact that it is in reality like Britain, an island, and unwilling to join up with either bank.'

These words express the disappointment of high hopes. None the less we have some small mercies to be thankful for. In 1933 the Upper Houses of Convocation endorsed the growing revival of Intercommunion in such 'special areas' as remote districts, School and College Chapels, and conferences to promote reunion. It is for us to make the most of these concessions. They happily offset the general principle of Lambeth 1930, 'that Intercommunion should be the goal of, rather than a means to, the restoration of union.'

In the last Lambeth report this principle is supposed to be evident from what has been already said, though, as Canon Rogers has pointed out, there is in fact no discussion at all of Intercommunion as a means of restoring unity. Indeed, as he further points out,[8] such statements in the report as 'the great Non-Episcopal Communions, standing for rich elements of truth, liberty, and life which might otherwise have been obscured or neglected,' and 'we believe that God Himself is calling us to an adventure of good-will,' would seem to call at the least for a full consideration of the desirability of intercommunion without further delay. Inside our own Church at any rate the Communion is felt as promoting as much as expressing Unity between the different schools of thought. A recent conference of Evangelicals and 'Catholics' to discuss 'Eucharistic Unity' affirmed that 'the faithful use of the Lord's Supper can alone reveal its inexhaustible meaning, and *thus in the unity of experience we shall draw nearer to unity in belief*.'[9] Further, all the recent cases of reunion among the Free Churches have been preceded, not followed, by intercommunion. And in its negotiations with the Orthodox Church, and its agreements with the Old

[8] *Ib.*, p. 170.

[9] *Ib.*, p. 174.

Catholics in 1931, the Church of England has itself belied this principle that intercommunion should be the goal of, and not the means to, reunion.

The fact is, of course, that the Orthodox and Old Catholic Churches are episcopal and the Free Churches are not. And episcopacy will be the big crux when the Lausanne Conference re-assembles at Edinburgh next year. There is no claim for episcopacy in the Thirty-nine Articles, nor is the three-fold ministry anywhere put forward in the Prayer Book as a necessary mark of Christ's Church. But episcopacy has been the traditional[10] order since Apostolic times, and on the whole it has worked well. And although, as the Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich told us last year, 'the modern idea of self-ruling communities has a bearing on Church government, as it has on the administration of any group of human beings associated for some great purpose,' episcopacy is so widespread, so tested, and so open to various modifications, that it must surely form the backbone of the Church of the future. The Congregationalist Principal of Mansfield College writes :[11]

'Free Churchmen must recognize that as a matter of practical politics no Reunion is possible in England except upon a basis of episcopacy . . . In the last resort it is not to government by bishops that Free Churchmen have objected, but to "salvation by bishops," to a particular theory of episcopacy and to an unspiritual uniformity imposed by bishops. Episcopacy as such is not inconsistent with the true spiritual liberty of the local congregation.'

Our Anglican episcopacy is markedly different from the Roman, and most of us would be glad to see more laity, and in particular more truly representative laity, sharing in the government of the Church. Is it too much to hope that some such scheme as that before South India, or that outlined in a *A Sketch of a United Church*, which ingeniously seeks to harmonize the Episcopal, Presbyteral, and Congregational systems, may be boldly endorsed at Edinburgh next summer?

But unity of organization is after all of small importance compared with unity of spirit. Far more vital than Edinburgh

[10] Indeed the universal order from the fourth to the sixteenth century.

[11] Nathaniel Micklem, D.D., *The Church Catholic*, p. 60.

is the re-assembly of the Stockholm Conference in Oxford next July to consider the theme of 'Church, Community, and State.' It is surely obvious that, in the words of Dr. J. H. Oldham,[12] 'only as the Christian Gospel is brought into a close relation to the realities and actual problems of the world to-day can we expect mankind to recognize in it a living word of judgment and redemption.' It is not primarily, I believe, doctrinal difficulties that keep large masses of the working-classes in alienation from the Church; it is much more the feeling that an organization which maintains its officials in palaces partly by means of income from such questionable sources as mining royalties, and which lets so much of the injustice of our economic system pass by without protest, has nothing in common with them. It is sheer hypocrisy to preach the gospel that man cannot live by bread alone to those who have not even got bread. Actually our record in the matter of social reform does not seem to me to be as black as it is sometimes painted. Lord Shaftesbury, F. D. Maurice, and Scott Holland do not stand alone: and recently our Anglo-Catholic brothers have been commendably active in this direction. But there is little doubt that we could do more than we do. It is not of course primarily the task of the clergy to become sociologists. Those who are too much preoccupied with the world, even in order to save it, become themselves worldly. The clergy have not the time to master much of the complex technicalities of modern social problems. 'The pronouncements of some clergy upon sociological questions,' writes Dr. F. L. Cross, 'suffer only too often from a deplorable amateurism.'[13] And for this reason Sir Arnold Wilson, writing as a Christian M.P. in the same volume of essays, would discourage *ex cathedra* pronouncements on such matters from the pulpit or on occasions such as the Lambeth Conference, but regrets the increasing unwillingness of the Bishops to raise such issues *in debate* — 'with their Peers.' It is indeed unfortunate that the multiplication of diocesan duties has more and more kept the Bishops from the House of Lords. Perhaps this may be remedied by the suggestion, revived recently by Professor Norman Sykes, to establish a standing inner council of the chief bishops, with the creation

[12] *Church, Community, and State* (S.C.M., 1934), p. 43.

[13] In *The Church and the Twentieth Century*.

of fresh suffragans to take over more of the burden of diocesan administration. But, although it would be very wrong to discourage such clergy as have the time, the interest, and the ability, from sociological study, it is to the educated laity that we must look to for the detailed application of Christian principles in modern society. There are still some of them who think that their duty to God and the parson is done by a bored attendance at Sunday Mattins. Such people had almost better play golf.

Finally, we must look briefly at the difficult problem of Church and State. For this, apart from its intrinsic importance, calls for consideration in connection with reunion. It was on this issue that the Congregationalists first left the Church. In the Elizabethan settlement, as in Hooker, the Church was regarded as the whole nation on its religious side. Against this the Brownists, as they were then called, protested. Henry Barrowe[14] in his *Briefe Discovery of the False Church* saw it full of 'all the profane and wicked of the land—atheists, papists . . . gluttons, rioters, blasphemers . . . thieves, whores, witches, conjurors, etc., and who not that dwelleth in this island or is within the Queen's dominion.' The Church of England has long since ceased to claim these characters for its members, but we still cherish the special alliance with the State which keeps our chief bishops in the Lords and makes Parliament the final arbiter of the Church's constitution. At first sight this looks like secular control—a totalitarian encroachment on the part of the State. But Parliament is still, thank God, a predominantly Christian body, and in 1919 it delegated the right of initiating legislation on religious matters to the Church Assembly, whose decisions it has only refused to ratify on four occasions when the Church was itself divided. Nor has any Prime Minister appointed any Bishop who was 'fundamentally objectionable to the Archbishop' (I use the words of the Bishop of Chichester) during the past thirty years.

Under these circumstances it seems hardly necessary to propose, as does the recent Commission's report on Church and State, that 'spiritual' measures should no longer be referred to Parliament. As things are, the Laity are in fact better represented there than in the Church Assembly. Of course the State may

[14] Quoted at length by Dr. Micklem in *The Church Catholic*, p. 42.

alter so much that it becomes necessary for the Church to sever the bond. But it is surely more important to take steps to prevent such conditions arising than to legislate for a grievance not yet felt. Disestablishment would be widely taken to mean that England had ceased to be a Christian country. At the same time, popular misconceptions about the Establishment are undoubtedly one of the bars to reunion. Leading Nonconformists are far from objecting to the State recognition of religion; but they look askance at anything that smacks of secular control. The pamphlet called *A Sketch of a United Church*, to which I have already referred, declares that 'the spiritual actions of the Church must be free from the control of any secular authority.' Does the term 'secular authority' include Parliament? And if so, can we accept this ruling? I have not the knowledge or the experience to answer this, at present, alas, academic question. But I hope we may be called upon to answer it. And it seems to me that if the future Church Assembly included representatives, and real representatives, of the Free Churches, and if the machinery were such that no hasty reforms could be pushed through by a bare majority, we might be willing to forego the comprehensiveness and the freedom for minorities which the present association with Parliament brings. On the other hand, objections could no longer be made on the score of non-Anglicans in Parliament controlling the Church. No doubt the establishment will have to be modified in some respects. But the chief modification I should like to see is the co-establishment of Christians not now members of the English Church.

For the present we must be content to co-operate in evangelism, in worship and, perhaps above all, in education, with our brother Christians of all parties. The rise of the Student Christian Movement has shown how largely denominationalism is out of date. Nor must we forget our fellows overseas. We English have still an unenviable reputation for being insular; and our Movement is not as strong as it might be in international contacts. I have already mentioned the two great ecumenical conferences to be held next year at Edinburgh and Oxford. And I should like to close by mentioning another gathering in Oxford in early August. This is the conference of the International Association for liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom, whose

secretariat is in Holland; and its theme is — 'Liberal Christianity: the world's need.' I have recently returned from a preparatory meeting of this body, which is especially strong in Holland, and the prevailing spirit seemed to me the same as our's. Yet most of them had no more heard of our Union than most of us probably have of their large and growing association. I share their hopes that several of our members may attend their meeting here next August. Liberal Christianity is indeed the world's need. And it is only by facing the world squarely that the great new Catholic Church of the future can find her destiny and win her crown.

WHAT TO BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE

By the Rev. A. C. Bouquet, D.D., Vicar of All Saints', Cambridge.

THE Bible is like Art and Politics. Every amateur thinks himself qualified to expound it (*e.g.* Bernard Shaw), and the specialist in its study, like the super-realist or the party-politician, is tempted to make his activities into an inhuman private game. To understand it truly one has to try to combine the fruits of specialist study with the common-sense and humaneness of the plain man.

Let us begin with a few elementary points. The word 'Bible' itself, properly understood, is a collective noun. It is the title of a *body* of literature, rather like the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinorum. The Bible should never be thought of as *a* book, in the sense in which we think of Trevelyan's one-volume History of England as *a* book. It is a collection of small books. The original word Biblia, though in late Latin it becomes a feminine singular, was originally a Greek neuter diminutive plural—'the little books.' It follows therefore that it is a barbarous error to talk about the Bible 'being true' (*e.g.* Sir Charles Marston's book, *The Bible is True*). A certain great truth, and many lesser truths, come to us through this body of ancient literature, as I shall presently try to show, but to say of the whole corpus that '*it* is true' is simply to misuse words. Of course what Sir Charles Marston means is that archaeological investigations confirm the historical accuracy of certain documents included in the Bible. But this is not what the title of his book conveys to the man in the street. Yet in a corpus of miscellaneous literature it does not follow that we want to prove historical accuracy of *all* the documents. We may in some cases, but in others we shall look either for correctness of theory, or beauty of diction, or again for edification of the soul. It does not matter whether King Lear or Job really walked this earth. The effect of each drama remains unchanged. It does not matter two straws whether there ever really was a Hebrew called Naboth who had a vineyard, or a negro

called Uncle Tom who lived in a cabin. The two tales are just as forceful, whether their basis be history or fiction. But it does matter a great deal whether the Hebrew people were correct in their supposition that the Divine Providence over-rules the course of events, and it matters supremely whether Jesus of Nazareth is correctly portrayed for us in our canonical gospels, or whether He was only, as Eisler has tried to make out, a political revolutionary, or again — only a mythical hero, created by the imagination of the Early Church. The function, therefore, of the honest literary critic is to ascertain, as surely as circumstances allow, the precise nature of the various component parts of this collection of ancient documents, and especially whether those sections, the significance of which depends upon their correct portrayal of historical happenings, are able to bear the weight of belief which has been erected upon them.

Let us assume that an impartial enquirer from some remote corner of the globe is confronted with this collection of literature. What will he discover? He will discover that it falls into two separate groups. The first of these, he will find, consists of a series of documents which represent the classic national literature of the Hebrew people. It is in substance full of variety, and comprises a cosmogony, much folk-lore, chronicles interpreted so as to edify, sermons, legal codes, collections of aphorisms, a hymn-book, a drama, and the soliloquy of a theistic philosopher. The second group, he will find, represents the classic literature of a new religious movement — the Christian Church. It opens with four memoirs, recording and interpreting the career of its Founder, Jesus of Nazareth. These are followed by an account of the earliest beginnings of the movement, regarded as the extended activity of that Founder, subsequent to His withdrawal from ordinary life upon earth. A miscellaneous collection of letters written by Christian leaders then ensues, and the corpus ends with a document recording a series of visions vouchsafed to a Christian prophet.

On making enquiries, our stranger will find that the relation of the first group to the second is somewhat differently stated by Hebrews and by Christians. The latter affirm that the two together record the progressive unfolding of God's purpose in the life of a particular nation, and the preparation in history for a

supreme climax, which is reached in the birth and career of a single individual, the historical Jesus. The former affirm that the first group records the dealings of God with the Hebrew nation as God's chosen and suffering servant, and that the supreme climax is the bestowal of the Law upon that nation, to have and to hold from henceforth even for ever as the basis of a holy life of witness before the nations;[1] while the second group, though interesting, is a record of an illegitimate development.

The construction of the Bible corpus as it at present stands is in consequence the work of the Christian society, which has always maintained that it holds the true interpretation of Hebrew history, and so of Hebrew literature. The Christian Church has ever claimed that Hebrew history was intended by Divine purpose to lead up to the career of Jesus, viewed as God's saving Act, and that the Hebrew national religious society was intended by God to pave the way for its enlargement into a spiritual Israel, a universal inter-racial, international, inter-cultural religious society, comprising all peoples, nations, and languages. The exclusively Hebrew use therefore of what is called the Old Testament involves a belief which ends in stagnation, in a blind alley, in a dead end. Although the second group of writings in the Bible corpus cannot be rightly understood without the first, the value of the first can only be justly estimated when it is viewed as leading on to the second. The two taken together form what is called the 'Canon' or standard collection, and this collection is declared to be the sole documentary source of information as to Christian belief. This is clearly stated in the Anglican Articles VI and VIII, and is re-affirmed in resolution three of the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops, held in 1930. Even the Creeds are subordinate to scriptural proof and scriptural exposition of their meanings, while only plain Bible statements and fair deductions therefrom are permitted in determining the answer to the question, 'What is the belief of the Christian movement?'

[1] So that, as Mr. Loewe has recently said (*Proc. of the Society of Jews and Christians*), what the Incarnation is to the Christian, the Law is to the Jew.

It is important that we should understand clearly what this claim involves or does not involve.

First of all, it rules out any merely humanistic use of this collection of literature, as incapable of arriving at its true significance. Merely to interpret the documents as illustrating human experience, the quest of many generations of human beings, is, of course, not impossible, but it misses the point. We here encounter the protest made by Karl Barth and his friends, as well as by the more old-fashioned fundamentalists, so-called. Liberalism and modernism have sometimes seemed to them to treat the Scriptures as a bundle of literary survivals and no more: whereas the tradition of Protestantism ever was to regard these documents as pointing beyond themselves, beyond their treatment as a mere record of human research and exploration, and to regard them as mediating to mankind the prophetic word of God, the *Deus dixit*, the Divine Initiative; not merely 'God permitting Himself to be understood and discovered by man' but 'God finding man out, and causing him to understand what He, the Lord God, is Himself doing.' We cannot follow the Barthians and fundamentalists in their exaggerated estimate of mankind as so corrupt and ruined that it is incapable of making any responsible approach whatever to God; but this much we must concede to them. They rightly remind us that no modernism which seeks to declare the truth correctly can permit itself to ignore the declaration contained in the opening verse of *Hebrews I.* 'God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things.' Whatever critical exegesis may tell us of the Scriptures, it is wrong-headed exegesis if it denies that they claim to record both a discontinuous as well as a continuous activity of Deity.

At the same time, in order to gain a just appreciation of this Divine message, we must faithfully pursue the course laid down for us by Benjamin Jowett, and 'interpret the Bible like any other book.' No mechanical theory of verbal inspiration can guide us. We have to avail ourselves of the labours of the best linguistic, textual and archaeological experts, to try to find out the exact meaning of each document at the time of its composi-

tion or compilation, and where necessary to reconstruct, to the best of our ability, the sources, oral and otherwise, which lie behind it. We have also to weigh the construction placed upon each document by those who have used it, even when that construction seems incompatible with the plain and literal meaning of the words, or with the purity of the text; since this at any rate shows what the corporate body which made use of the documents intended to teach. Careful consideration of this teaching may then enable us to see where the text has been altered in a right or a wrong direction.

Secondly, the claim made in our articles involves a clear belief as to the position occupied by the Church. The Church cannot itself be the object of belief. We may believe what is taught by the Church (*e.g.* the words of the Nicene Creed) so long as it stands the test of the Scriptures, but no further. The Church cannot invent articles of belief. The Church can only declare what God has instituted it to declare. Beyond and above the Church stands the Word of God as defined in *Hebrews I*, and the Church exists to bear witness to this, to proclaim it, and to interpret it so as to be understood everywhere. The Church ideally may be regarded as part of the Word of God to man, and even as the extension of the Incarnation, but actually, and in its human aspect, it is the *instrument* of the Word, and is subordinated thereto.

And thirdly. The acceptance of this view of the Bible carries with it the estimate of man's reason implied in that literature, and the latter is quite unmistakable. 'The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.' 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind.' 'The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made.' These are not mere isolated texts. They represent the whole tone and temper of the Bible literature. The Holy One may be beyond all likeness, but by analogy man's intellect may form *some* idea as to His nature. It follows that the reason of man may with reverence be applied to the interpretation of the Bible literature. Even the Nicene Creed must not only be interpreted by Scripture, but by Scripture itself elucidated through the agency of reverent and reasonable study. Let it be granted that in certain sections of the Christian Church

reason has been and still is disparaged.[2] We are not here concerned with these, but only with the position of our own Anglican Communion; and there can be no doubt as to what from the Reformation onwards that position has been.

Let me, if you will, develop this point a little. In the year 1584 Richard Hooker was appointed by Queen Elizabeth to be Master of the Temple. Lord Burghley had proposed a Calvinistic Puritan, Walter Travers, who had for some time been the afternoon lecturer, but Archbishop Whitgift had objected to him as one who would not be loyal to the Anglican position, and had suggested another man. The Queen would not accept Whitgift's nominee, but made her own appointment, in which however Whitgift acquiesced. There then began the famous duel between 'Canterbury in the morning and Geneva in the afternoon' which ended in the inhibition of Travers by Whitgift, for preaching against the Master. Travers appealed to the Privy Council, and Hooker wrote an answer to his 'Supplication,' and addressed it to the Archbishop, with the result that he won his case. From these two documents it is possible to see the main points at issue between Travers and Hooker, and of these the chief turns out to be the place of human reason in relation to faith. Hooker declines to use the Bible to strangle his human faculties. Travers, like our neo-Calvinist friends on the continent of Europe to-day, regards the *imago Dei* in man as so hopelessly ruined and corrupted by sin that man is incapable of employing his reason aright. Hooker thought differently, and his thought received official approval. Whitgift, finding that he had not enough time to deal personally with the Calvinists, deputed Hooker to write a treatise which should review the whole controversy between the supporters of Elizabeth's religious settlement and those who wished to overthrow it. Hooker was accordingly appointed to a country living in Wiltshire, and later on to one near Canterbury, and between the years 1591 and 1597 he composed the greater part of his *Laws of the Ecclesiastical Polity*, the fifth book of which is expressly dedicated to Whitgift.

It may therefore justly be claimed that in Hooker's treatise,

[2] Luther, for example, speaks in quite shocking and brutal terms of 'that whore, reason.'

book three, we have a definition of the way in which the Anglican Church relates reason to revelation, a definition which that Church has never since repudiated.

The important passages are short, and may as well be quoted in full.

Hooker begins by describing the Calvinistic disparagement of reason.

> 'But so it is, the name of the light of nature is made hateful with men; the 'star of reason and learning' and all other such-like helps, beginneth no otherwise to be thought of than if it were an unlucky comet; or as if God had so accursed it, that it should never shine or give light in things concerning our duty any way towards Him, but be esteemed as that star in the Revelation called Wormwood, which being fallen from heaven, maketh rivers and waters in which it falleth so bitter, that men tasting them die thereof. A number there are, who think they cannot admire as they ought the power and authority of the word of God, if in things divine they should attribute any force to man's reason. For which cause they never use reason so willingly as to disgrace reason.'

And he then goes on to remark that, as the Apostle teaches,

> 'nature hath need of grace, whereunto I hope we are not opposite, by holding that grace hath use of nature.' Further, he says, the vain philosophy of which we are warned to take heed is 'not that philosophy which is true and sound knowledge attained by natural discourse of reason, but that philosophy which to bolster heresy or error casteth a fraudulent show of reason upon things which are indeed unreasonable.'

And lastly three fine sentences may be quoted, in which he makes the Anglican position clear and positive.

> (1) 'There is in the world no kind of knowledge, whereby any part of truth is seen, but we justly account it precious; yea, that principal truth, in comparison whereof all other knowledge is vile, may receive from it some kind of light; whether it be that Egyptian and Chaldaean wisdom mathematical, wherewith Moses and Daniel were furnished; or that natural, moral, and civil wisdom, wherein Solomon excelled all men; or that rational and oratorial wisdom of the Grecians, which the Apostle St. Paul brought from Tarsus; or that Judaical, which he learned in Jerusalem, sitting at the feet of Gamaliel: to detract from the dignity thereof were to injure even God Himself, who being that light which none can approach unto, hath sent out these lights whereof we are capable, even as so many sparkles resembling the bright fountain from which they rise.'
>
> (2) 'Unto the Word of God, being in respect of that end for which God ordained it perfect, exact and absolute in itself, we do not add reason as a supplement of any maim or defect therein, but as a necessary instrument, without which we could not reap by the Scripture's perfection that fruit and benefit which it yieldeth.'
>
> (3) 'Scripture indeed teacheth things above nature, things which our reason by itself could not reach unto. Yet those things also we believe, knowing *by reason* that the Scripture is the Word of God.'

(That last sentence we should to-day frame a little differently, and say 'contains' rather than 'is.')

These passages are, I submit, the charter of a true and wise modernism, and as such let us cherish them.

But now let us return to the Bible itself. One thing only binds together this miscellaneous collection, namely, the fact that it is the inherited property and instrument of a certain mighty religious movement. Remove it from its association with that movement and it falls to pieces. Part becomes the national property of the Jews, part a bundle of Hellenistic Greek documents of varying dates, authorship and credibility, belonging to the period of late antiquity, and throwing light upon the otherwise obscure origins of a religious movement called 'Christian.' Taken together as a whole, however, it records and witnesses to the active and self-revealing nature of the one Living and True God spoken of in our First Article, and to His Activity and Utterance both Church and Bible are subordinated.

The idea, it would seem, of attaching to the Christian Society a body of documents has been two-fold. First, it has aimed at giving free access to the sources and records of a certain religious movement. Second, it has aimed at stimulating and maintaining the religious life by contact, as close as maybe, with the prophetic utterances and actions which initiated it.

These two aims are really quite distinct, however closely they may seem to be allied. The former is educational and intellectual, and by itself will only furnish a detached view of the religion in question. The latter, though prepared for by the former, is edificatory and spiritual. It seeks to remove the barriers which separate the centuries, and to enable God to speak through Amos, Deutero-Isaiah, Jesus Christ Himself, Peter, Paul, and John, to us who live to-day, whoever we are. But both processes are equally important.

Any movement which depends for its strength upon a source which is spatio-temporally conditioned, has to be very careful, the further (spatio-temporally) it travels away from that source.

The revived interest in the Bible which marks Reformed Christianity (so-called) was largely controversial. It appeared in the sixteenth century that a large part of the Christian Church had come to present Christianity in a form which was incon-

sistent with its source as displayed in the Scriptures. Evolution might have been necessary, but many things in late medieval Catholicism, especially the doctrine of merit, appeared as being either false evolution, or else pagan accretions which were incompatible with the prophetic Christian religion. The reformers therefore set themselves to make the Scriptures accessible in the vernacular, (i) in order that intellectually the true facts might be accessible to all who cared to read, (ii) in order that all Christians might be able to feed upon the prophetic Word of God contained in the documents of the prophetic Christian movement.

It soon, however, became evident that the documents were not all capable of standing both kinds of treatment. Luther, *e.g.* found Esther and James unsatisfactory from a theological standpoint, and even the most ardent verbal inspirationist could hardly select the tenth and thirty-sixth chapters of Genesis for public or private reading and meditation, nor even the first seventeen verses of Matthew I. The system of having a lectionary was therefore adopted.

How much is involved in this principle of a lectionary is not perhaps realized by the majority of Christians.

The first or canonical selection of books is described by Origen in the early part of the third century A.D. as of *δεδημοσιευμέναι γράφαι*, and the adjective seems to have been in general use. In other words, the Christian Church agreed that certain literature should be publicly circulated for study and reading. But it was not expected that the whole of this should be publicly read in divine service. It would seem that selections from it came gradually to be made, and that the harder and less edifying parts were either omitted, or if read, immediately interpreted in a mystical or allegorical sense as prefiguring something connected with our Lord. The idea of a shorter Bible does not originate with Sir Arthur Quiller Couch, Dr. Nairne or Dr. Glover, but was in vogue at quite an early date. The Reformers of the sixteenth century reacted from it because they felt that the selections were small, scrappy, and one-sided ('no book was ever read through'). Yet even they made their own selection, which appears in our Anglican Prayer Book as attached to the Calendar, and was revised in 1871 and again in 1922 and 1928.

Lectionaries, however, did not confine themselves to passages from the Bible alone. The reading and exposition of the canonical scriptures was of course derived from the customary worship of the synagogue. But St. Jerome informs us that there were other books which the Church read 'for example of life and instruction of manners.' He means no doubt part of the Old Testament apocrypha. Yet in certain lists we find included such works as the Shepherd of Hermas and the First Epistle of Clement, and it may well be that in the earliest times writings of this sort were read in the congregation. Later on, the tendency developed to add a lesson from one of the Fathers. Gregory the Great about the year 600 testifies to this, and says that homilies from the Fathers were read at matins, and the biographies of the saints on their festivals. It appears to have been the influence of the monks which led to this development. The selection of homiletic passages and commentaries on scripture was made generally by the abbot, but in process of time no doubt it became more stereotyped. Dr. Frere reminds us that the service in a secular breviary contained much variety, sometimes one group and sometimes three groups of three lessons, each drawn from Scripture, the Fathers, or Lives of the Saints. The three in each group were generally continuous, but there was not necessarily any continuity between the groups. Quinōnes simplified this system by reducing the lessons to a uniform three at Matins, *i.e.* (1) Old Testament, (2) New Testament, (3) Acts or Epistles, except on a saint's day, when a proper from the life of the saint was appointed. As saints' days were numerous, this must have meant the inclusion of a large number of biographical passages from outside the Bible. Cranmer in an early draft retained this system, but afterwards discarded it for an entirely Biblical selection.

It would seem that if these facts about lectionaries are duly regarded, we can derive from them considerable fresh evidence as to the properly tenable belief about the Bible itself. Reading for edification is plainly something distinct from study for doctrinal purposes. The Canon, the δεδημοσιευμέναι γράφαι, exists as a standard for faith. It cannot (as Dibelius says) be enlarged, because it really contains the classical witnesses as to what primitive Christianity really was and was meant to be, what it emerged

from, what it pre-supposes by way of Hebrew *praeparatio evangelica*, what central facts of history it involves. Passages from the Canon may also be suitable for edificatory reading, just as non-Canonical passages may edify, without the books from which they are taken being eligible for inclusion within the Canon.[3]

But the function of the δεδημοσιευμέναι γράφαι themselves is to provide standard material for the knowledge and verbal expression of the Gospel which the Church enshrines and has to bear. These documents must be open to all, so that anyone can check scientifically the statements made by the accredited teachers in the Church and see that these official teachers are doing their work properly; but it does not follow that the whole of these documents in every part is suitable for devotional and liturgical reading, especially to unlettered or unsophisticated congregations, nor does it follow that passages outside the Canon cannot be selected by the Church for such devotional and liturgical purposes.[4]

I have spent most of my time considering the form and function of the Bible *corpus*, and have said little about its con-

[3] The inference would seem to be that the Church may and should go on selecting passages for lectionary use (*i.e.* public reading 'for example of life and instruction of manners'), because inspiration by the Holy Spirit does not cease with the last book of the Bible; but that the Church, so long as she claims to be 'Christian' and not simply 'Theistic,' cannot add to the Canon.

[4] Prof. C. H. Dodd in his illuminating and suggestive monograph on the Bible remarks: 'Who would not give Esther in exchange for Ecclesiasticus?' Yet the curious fact remains that a book like Esther, in which the name of God does not even occur, conveys more of the essential canonical principle of the guiding hand of God in history than does the prudential wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach. The latter, though edifying to read, is Greek in spirit; the former, although a savage tale of bloodshed and revenge, stresses the unique contribution of Christian Hebraism: 'who knoweth whether thou art not come to the Kingdom for such a time as this.' In the former man is the artist of his own life. In the latter man, or rather woman, is found and used by God to establish deliverance. Further: The Song of Songs may or may not be patient of mystical and allegorical interpretation as symbolizing the relationship between God and the soul or Christ and the Church. But one thing is certain. Its retention in the Canon severs both Jew and Christian by a deep gulf from those extreme ascetics who deny that the sexual life is one of God's gifts, to be hallowed and directed aright, and consecrated to His purposes.

tent. No doubt the other papers at this Conference will be dealing with the latter (at least indirectly), and this consideration to some extent relieves me of such a task. Nevertheless it is possible, and I think it is my duty, to set down the gist of what is conveyed to mankind through this collection of literature, and I will try to do it in a few short paragraphs.

(1) The universe is the orderly creation of a Self-Existent Spiritual Being, who is Good, Holy and Benevolent, and who dwells in it as well as reigning over it.

(2) Human history is over-ruled and guided by this Being, so that although men are free, there is a Divine Purpose in their careers.

(3) Each nation and individual exists for a special purpose. The purpose for which the Hebrews existed was to prepare the way for the Self-Revelation of God in space and time.

(4) This Revelation is progressive, but came to a climax in the career of Jesus of Nazareth, in whom the Divine Being most perfectly revealed His Character of holy and self-giving love.

(5) The Revelation made in Jesus is continued in His Church, which is the extension of His activity throughout subsequent centuries.

(6) There is a certain kind of life which is proper to man as God has evolved him, and which is guided by a special spirit or principle. This is indicated in the precepts of Jesus Christ; but mankind falls short of it, and strays from it, and needs rescue.

(7) This rescue is effected by the perpetual and unfailing love of God, shown forth in Christ, a love which is not defeated but victorious.

It is thus the *substance* of the Bible-literature which is important, not the actual words themselves; though some of these words are of immortal preciousness, such for example as Psalms xix and xxiii, Isaiah xl, the parables and Passion story of Jesus, the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians written in praise of Agapē, and the poetic vision of the victorious Christ in Revelation i. The richness of this literature in tale and aphorism can only be appreciated by those who will read it patiently and intelligently.

It is no part of the purpose of the Scriptures to give information on those themes which are the proper subject matter of scientific enquiry, nor is the Bible a collection of separate oracles, each containing a final declaration of truth. The doctrine of God is the centre of its teaching, and the crown of it is Jesus Christ. But much of the literature merely illustrates the progressive history and education of the Hebrew people, and is only indirectly of value to us, since it contains records of ideas which subsequent generations outgrew and left behind, or which they were actually enjoined to discard for other and higher conceptions of the Divine Nature and Purpose.

It would of course be possible to summarize the purport of each separate book, but this has so often been done, that it seems unnecessary to repeat the process, which would swell this paper to an inordinate length. Let it suffice to bear tribute to the work performed (for example) by the Bishop of Birmingham a few years ago in the *Outline of English Literature*, and by the late

Dr. Nairne in his charming and imaginative handbooks.[5]

The canonical scriptures are different from any other existing sacred literature. Indeed it is not easy to compare them as a whole with the scriptures of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. The Gita and the Lotus may be comparable in certain respects to the Fourth Gospel, but they are in reality writings of a wholly different *genre*. The Upanishads are not the same class of poem as the Psalms. The Koran never really gets beyond Deutero-Isaiah, and hammers one note throughout. The core of the Canon is not propaganda but Divine purpose, which culminates in a single career, 'the eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus *our* Lord' (Messiah Jesus our Kurios).

It is rooted and grounded in a sequence of events, and in delineating this sequence the canonical gospels stand central. However justly we may reckon churchly interpretation to have determined the final form of those documents, behind them and shining through them stands a real figure, not a dream of the early Church. I would endorse what was said by the reader of the paper last night and clearly distinguish between the commandments of the Lord, and the guidance of the Spirit. Throughout the epistles I am most sure that there is reference back again and again to a real factual Jesus, and to real *logia* and works of mercy. 'Whom having not seen ye love' (I *Peter*), 'Be ye *mimetai* of me, even as I am of Christ' (St. Paul), and so on.

Dr. Glover is not to be put out of date too quickly; and he is right when he quotes:

> perpetual comfort in a face,
> the lineaments of Gospel books.

That face, perhaps never really painted, comes to us more surely through the television of the worshipping disciples. The Lord looked upon Peter, and the significance of such a look was rightly read and interpreted.

The real strength I think of (so-called) Reformed Christianity has been its whole-hearted acceptance of the Old Testament as a foundation for the New. Catholicism, though it has been strong in its emphasis upon the Gentile *praeparatio evangelica* which is contained in natural philosophical theology such as

[5] And also in such books as Peake's and the S.P.C.K. One-Volume Commentaries, and in the Clarendon Bible.

that of Plato, has been weak in its neglect of the moral rigour of the Hebrew Prophets. This was natural perhaps among Gentile Catholics with no Semitic ancestry, but it has weakened their witness and has resulted in making the Mediterranean Church ineffective when called upon to deal with grave moral issues. An eminent Congregationalist missionary from South India once pointed out to me the importance of laying the foundation of the Ten Commandments and Amos among his converts. I doubt whether a Catholic missionary would have laid the same stress. If we like, we may say that it is just the difference between the methods of Tyndale Biscoe of Srinagar and those of St. Francis Xavier.

I will content myself in conclusion with a brief reference to two important questions which plainly arise at this juncture:

(1) In what sense is there a Word of God outside the Bible?

(2) Is the substance of the Bible message as credible an account of reality as ever it was, or is it in process of being superseded (for example) by the Communist ideology?

The correct answer to the first question has often been discussed at previous conferences of our union, and concerns the element of finality which may be claimed for the Christian religion. But the idea of a Word of God outside the Scriptures has been more recently brought into prominence by the claim, 'Hitler ist Wort Gottes!' and by the plain assertion of the Japanese Christian leader, Kagawa, 'The entire universe is God's Word.' In harmony with the spirit of the passages which I have quoted from Richard Hooker we may retort, 'Why not?' Why should not God fulfil Himself in many ways, yet in one unique way also (Jesus), for one special purpose? Just as within the literature of the Bible we have a record of discovery as well as of revelation, so outside the confines of the Bible we find a record of revelation as well as of discovery. The blend of both which the Bible documents exhibit is normative and decisive, but it is neither isolated nor exclusive.

The second question needs fuller treatment than I can give it here, but perhaps I may be allowed briefly to suggest the lines along which it seems to me that it may be answered. It is fairly obvious that the only serious rival to the Christian International

is the Communist one. Nationalism and state-worship may be formidable enemies, but they are old ones, and the Christian faith has defeated them before, and can defeat them again. But Marxism in its various developments is a different proposition, and it should be handled on the field of the intellect with the strongest weapons we possess. I am disposed to agree that it is dialectically related to Christianity and therefore capable of being resolved by the latter into elements which can enter into a synthesis and elements which must inevitably be rejected. But the construction of that synthesis is a task which I should like to see undertaken by a conference of Modern Churchmen in the near future. Dr. Glover tells us that the early Christians defeated their pagan adversaries because they out-thought them, out-lived them, and out-died them. The Christians of to-day can only expect to triumph if they in their generation do the same. Meanwhile let us not apologise for the Word of God as it comes to us recorded through the medium of the Christian Bible, but reckon that if it be a true Word it must needs prevail, though it can only do so if we allow it free course in our lives.

There is one single point on which the misuse of the Bible specially exposes it to criticism. An over-emphasis upon the destruction of the *imago dei* by sin has led to the development of a twice-born Christianity which is sooner or later confronted by its dialectic opposite. An Austrian doctor told me the other day that long residence in Java had led him to doubt the beneficial effect of Dutch Calvinistic Christian missions upon the heathen. 'They are no longer happy,' he said! In view of the stress laid upon the 'lostness' of mankind by some continental teachers, it is not surprising that Lord Passfield should signalize the new Russian civilization as totally devoid of any consciousness of original guilt, and that the Hitler youth movement should declare 'young Germany is proud to be free from any degrading sense of sin.' We Anglicans are taught to look to our Lord Himself rather than to 'His first great cataclysmic convert'[4] for our doctrine of man, and in this we may find ourselves preserved from the errors alike of Rome and Geneva, of Moscow and Berlin. It is both proper and possible to walk humbly with one's God; but to cringe and grovel, and to teach men so, is to pave the way for a revival of the sin of pride in its worst form.

[4] The phrase is Friedrich von Hügel's.

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

By the Rev. Roy McKay, M.A., Vicar of Mountfield, Sussex.

THE story is told of President Coolidge that when he returned one Sunday morning after an absence, his wife asked him where he had been. 'To church,' he replied. 'What did the minister say?' 'He talked about sin.' 'And what did he say about sin?' 'He was against it.'[1] In the minds of many, the ideas associated with the word sin are hardly more definite than this. Sin is something which the parson is against. This vagueness, which, it is to be feared, is almost as characteristic of the pulpit as it is of the pew, may account for the assertion, not seldom repeated, that the modern generation is not bothering about its sins. If the assertion is true, it is to be hoped that Modernists will be among the first to tell the modern generation that its failure to be bothered about its sins, is not a sign of a new-won freedom from the curious conventions of its grandfathers, but only one of pitiable ignorance of the obligations and responsibilities of human life.

In order to arrive at the Christian view of the nature of sin and forgiveness, it will be best to approach the subject by taking stock of three conceptions or interpretations of sin, which contain strong elements of truth, and are closely allied to the Christian view, but yet fall short of that view, and are, on a final analysis, distinguishable from it. For these three interpretations, as for much else in the thought of this paper, I am deeply indebted to Professor H. H. Farmer's recent important book, *The World and God*. The names which Professor Farmer gives to these interpretations are lawlessness, self-abuse, and selfishness. We will consider each of these in turn.

First, 'lawlessness.' Here the act of sin is felt to be disobedience to a law inherent in the nature of things. The law, the breaking of which is felt to be sin, may take many different forms. It may be thought of as the decrees of a Divine Lawgiver, such as we see embodied in the Ten Commandments; or it may be thought of in the form of the abstract principles of

[1] Quoted in *Modern Man in search of a Soul*, by C. G. Jung.

righteousness, truth, justice; or, again, as a kind of Life Force, such as Mr. Bernard Shaw writes of in *Back to Methuselah*. Whatever form the law takes, man feels that in the breaking of it he is going against something which stands in its own right and commands his obedience.

It is safe to say that all men, to a greater or less extent, have this sense of a law, imposed from without, which carries with it a categorical imperative. Probably most of us are content to stick to the Ten Commandments, with possibly minor alterations. But even those more enlightened moderns, who aspire to grow out of them, will assuredly find ten more waiting for them round the corner, with an equally imperious 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not.' For the essence of the idea of sin as lawlessness is that man feels himself to be a creature under orders, which he cannot disobey with impunity, and this necessity which is laid upon him is not dependent upon the form or content of that which he deems to be the law.

Second, there is the idea of sin which Professor Farmer calls 'self-abuse.' Considered in this form, sin is thought of as man's denial of his own true nature. In this case, the law, the breaking of which is sin, is not felt to be something external, imposed from without, but the internal law of man's proper being. In the first interpretation, the idea of sin is legalistic: here it is psychological. Man feels himself to be at war with himself. His personality, to use the psychological phrase, is not properly integrated. 'Two souls, alas, dwell in my breast apart,' cries Goethe's Faust, echoing what St. Paul said long before, 'the good which I would, I do not; the evil which I would not, that I practise.' Man is a creature at odds with himself. Here again is a tension, from which none of us can entirely escape. Lord Russell's book, *The Conquest of Happiness*, is an attempt, one of the best non-Christian attempts, to resolve this tension in the inner life of man. His prescription for happiness might be summarized in the maxims, Know yourself; Accept yourself; Be yourself. But it is to be feared that the modern world is full of people who have tried to follow this excellent advice, without achieving happiness.

Professor Farmer's third definition is that of sin as 'selfishness.' When thus interpreted, sin is felt to be an act of self-

isolation or irresponsibility towards the community of which the individual is a part. To sin is to cut oneself off from one's obligations to other men, to demand the portion of goods, which falleth to us, for our own independent use and enjoyment. The extent of the obligation, which our membership in the community imposes on us, may range from the shallow one, which binds together fellow-wearers of the same school tie, to the self-sacrifice involved in the Christian ethic, but underlying all variations of this obligation there is the claim of other life upon one's own. It is the denial of this claim which is felt to be sin.

Here, once more, is an unescapable tension, which seems to belong to human life as such. The fact of this tension is brought home to the mind of the modern man with peculiar intensity, because the world in which he lives is one in which the solidarity of the individual with the community, and the interdependence of one community with another, have been brought to a pitch hitherto unknown in history. The mechanized civilization of our day, and the tremendously increased facilities for intercommunication, combine to make those of sensitive imagination acutely conscious of the claims of other lives upon their own. To read of the conditions prevailing in the distressed areas of this country, let alone to see them, is to hear the accusation ringing in one's ears, 'Thou art the man.' Nor is the accusation in anyway answered by saying, as we are bound to say, 'What am I, as an individual, to do about it?' Is not the same tension felt, and must not the same accusation be heard, when we reflect upon a Europe preparing to let loose the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, and ourselves sitting down to debate upon sin and forgiveness?

To summarize what has so far been said, sin may be thought of as: First, an act contrary to a universal law. Second, an act by which we deny our own proper nature. Third, an act against our neighbour. But sin is a specifically religious category. To the religious spirit of man, sin is something more than what is included in any or all of these three ideas. The religious man feels that sin is first and foremost, and at its root all the time, an act against God. 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight,' cries the Psalmist, and whether or not they are David's words, we feel that they are

fully appropriate to the context of Nathan's denunciation. Moreover, the consciousness of sin as an act against God involves something more than is contained in the three ideas already referred to. This specifically religious consciousness of the nature of sin is derived from man's awareness of the special relationship in which he stands to God. In the eschatological moment, in which man knows and acknowledges himself to be a sinner, he is aware of the Divine claim upon him as making itself felt in a more direct, personal way, than is the case when that claim is felt solely in terms of law, his own nature, or his neighbour's welfare. 'Sin,' writes Professor Farmer, 'is something through which a man is set against *God*, the word God standing not for an impersonal Moral Order or Creative Life Force, nor for a man's own Better Self, nor for the Totality of Social Ideals, but for the Eternal as personal will which enters into relation with the will of man in a polarity or tension of personal relationship.'[2]

It is the Christian faith that man's relationship to God is determined by what God has done in and through Jesus Christ. God, in Jesus Christ, calls man into a life of fellowship with Himself. By responding to that call, man fulfils his true destiny, and finds his rightful place in a community of persons, which derives its existence from the same calling of God as that by which he himself is claimed.

If this is true, then the root idea of sin for Christianity is the denial of this relationship, the refusal to respond to this act of God, by which He calls man into fellowship with Himself and with his fellow-men. Against this background, the interpretations of sin that we have considered take on a new and deeper meaning.

First, that which was felt as lawlessness is now felt to be a broken relationship of personal communion. Seen in the light of the Christian revelation, what God asks of man is not obedience to a code of commandments, written or unwritten, nor loyalty to any abstract principles of righteousness and truth, but the allegiance of personal response to Himself. This seems to be the thought which lies behind the words of the Fourth Gospel, 'If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples.'

[2] *The World and God*, p. 188.

Second, that which was felt as self-abuse, or man's failure to be his proper self, is now seen as his refusal to accept the relationship to which God calls him. In denying this, man is denying the most fundamental thing about himself. He is denying the ground of his own existence. He is denying that which makes him man, for man is only truly man in virtue of the relationship to God in which God has placed him. The prodigal son comes to himself in the moment when the call of home makes him realize that he *is* a son. The same thought in a different context is the dominant note of the eighth chapter of Romans, where St. Paul sees the whole creative process waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Third, that which was felt as selfishness, the isolation of the self from the claims of other selves, is now seen to be the denial of a universal obligation, which arises from the truth that all men stand in the same relationship to God as ourselves. It is seen as the denial of that which is most fundamental in our relationship with our fellows, namely, our common origin in, and responsibility to, the calling of God.

The extent of our failure to respond to the calling of God is only revealed in the light of that perfect response, which was made by Jesus Christ. In Him we recognize one whose will was at every moment responsive to the will of God. 'The words that I say unto you, I speak not from myself, but the Father abiding in me doeth the works.' The Fourth Gospel only makes explicit the impression we get from the other gospels as well. In Jesus, again, we recognize a life of spontaneous inward freedom; here there is no inward cleavage, but the wholeness of a character perfectly tempered to its own self-fulfilment. Finally, in Him, we recognize one who was completely aware of, and responsive to, the needs of his fellow-men.

A true recognition of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is inevitably a recognition of sin in ourselves. As Canon Quick has pointed out, though Jesus did not come into the world in order to condemn the world, the world is none the less condemned by His coming.[3] It is the Cross which reveals the full measure of that condemnation. The life which God wills for men, is rejected by man. Man rejected it two thousand years

[3] Cf. *The Christian Sacraments*, p. 79.

ago in Palestine; he rejects it still. That which we acclaim as the life lived in perfect accord with the Divine Will, ends in failure, disgrace, torture, and death. In the fact of the Cross, the lawlessness, self-abuse, and selfishness of mankind reach their utmost limit. Nor can we escape responsibility for this event. The crucifixion is not an isolated accident of history. Christians in every age have felt their responsibility in this crime of crimes, and known that they stand condemned by it equally with Pilate, the Sanhedrin, and the Jewish crowd. In one sense the responsibility of later ages is greater than that of the Jewish world of two thousand years ago. As the light of the Christian gospel is kindled anew from age to age, casting its beams upon the new circumstances and conditions of an ever-changing world, the darkness in which that light shines, the darkness of new forms of lawlessness, self-abuse, and selfishness, is felt increasingly to be the same as that which surrounded Calvary. To be fully alive to that darkness, and to recognize it in oneself and in the world of men, is also to be aware of the light, which shines in upon it. If, under the shadow of the Cross, man stands condemned, really condemned, then also he stands forgiven, really forgiven. The truth of this paradox cannot be finally resolved. It must be apprehended as a paradox, in the same way as we must apprehend the truth of the paradox that God 'dwelleth in a light which no man can approach unto,' and yet is 'nearer than hands and feet.'

In Jesus Christ, the calling of God to man is revealed as the calling, in Professor Farmer's phrase, of 'holy love.' As we have seen, the claim which that calling makes upon man is an absolute one. It demands the most complete response in communion with God, in self-realization, and in fellowship with other men. The true nature of that calling is revealed in Jesus Christ, and His death upon the Cross is the measure of man's rejection of it. But the calling revealed in Jesus as limitless demand is also revealed in Him as limitless compassion. The cry, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,' epitomises the attitude which is characteristic of all the words and actions of Jesus when He was confronted with the sins of men. His death sets the seal to word and deed; by it word and deed receive the stamp of final truth.

Since the calling of God in Jesus Christ is thus revealed as holy love, the condemnation which it pronounces upon us does not cut us off from that calling. Because it is love which condemns, we are held more closely to that calling. Though we have seen this a hundred times, yet, like all paradoxical truths, it comes as a new truth every time we are awakened to it. In the calling of God in Jesus Christ we always hear both the condemnation of ourselves and the forgiveness by which that condemnation is overcome. Penitence and forgiveness always go hand in hand. To be truly penitent *is* in itself to be forgiven; to accept the forgiveness of God *is* in itself to be truly penitent before Him. Professor Farmer puts this point very clearly when he writes, 'It is not that we first repent and then something called forgiveness is added. The two things, though distinguishable in thought, are given in a single, inclusive, personal relationship of the profoundest possible kind, the penitence being deeper because the love of God is already seen to be succouring and forgiving, the succour and the forgiveness seeming the more wonderful the more, through penitence, the soul's complete unworthiness is felt.'[4]

In approaching the subject of this paper, we began with certain ideas which lie upon its circumference. We sketched the situation in which man finds himself placed through the different tensions, to which, as experience witnesses, man's life is inevitably exposed. From different points on that circumference, we tried to penetrate to the centre of the subject, and to state the paradox of the relationship between sin and forgiveness, as it is revealed in the light of the Christian revelation. To conclude, we must now move outwards again in thought, in order to see how these central convictions affect our understanding of those first ideas, and what light they throw upon the situation in which man finds himself. We will do this by formulating three propositions.

First. The forgiveness of God is the true ground of man's obedience to that moral law, which meets him with its imperious 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not.' It must be acknowledged that the Ten Commandments of Moses are not abrogated by the Two which Jesus gave to His disciples, any more than the Old Testament is abrogated by the New. One is fulfilled in the

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 198.

other, but that is quite a different thing. The law remains, however deeply we may penetrate to the heart of the Christian revelation. The laws of conduct, creed, and cult, these remain. They have changed their forms many times; they will change their forms many times more (this incidentally is one of the hopes of the Modernist. Foolish mortals, who cannot stomach the name, say it is their only hope), yet however often they change, in one form or another, they must inevitably remain. But in the light of the forgiveness of God, the nature of our obedience to them is changed from the service of the slave to the freedom of the friend. The prodigal son worked on his father's farm both before he went off on his own, and, presumably, after he came back. But in the meantime the relationship between father and son had undergone a fundamental change; its real nature had been disclosed. So that, though the work to be done was the same as ever, the atmosphere in which it was done was very different. It is in the light of such an apprehension of the forgiveness of God that we understand and embrace the truth of such phrases as 'whose service is perfect freedom,' and 'in His will is our peace.'

Second, the forgiveness of God is the true ground of man's self-fulfilment in a free, spontaneous, integrated life. The thought here is closely akin to our previous proposition. The tension in man's inner life is not done away by the forgiveness of God. This is made amply clear by the seventh chapter of Romans. When St. Paul wrote, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death,' he was not thinking of his life before his conversion; he was thinking of his life in the light of the experience of forgiveness. But though the tension remains, the sting of it is drawn, for by the act of the Divine forgiveness man knows himself to be, really to be, that which his own actions constantly belie. Dr. Jung writes, 'The modern man has heard enough about sin and guilt. He is sorely enough beset by his own bad conscience, and wants rather to learn how he is to reconcile himself with his own nature—how he is to love the enemy in his own heart and call the wolf his brother.'[5] We would maintain that this is precisely what the forgiveness of God enables man to do.

The last proposition is this. The forgiveness of God is the

[5] *Modern Man in search of a Soul*, p. 274.

true ground of community between mankind. Once again, man is not released from the tension in which his various relationships with other men involve him. The barriers of class, culture, nationality, inevitably divide us. No sentiments of human kindness and brotherhood will ever break them down. The world as we see it to-day, is a clamorous witness to the futility of the attempt to unite men by appeals to a common interest, a common economic welfare, a common civilization. It is the forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ which alone overcomes the barriers of class, culture and nationality. I am bound to my neighbour because he and I are both bound to the forgiving love of God. Our Lord's second commandment is rooted in the first, just as the first can only find its fulfilment in the second. Thus seen, the unity of mankind is not a pious hope for the future, but the fundamental reality of the present. We repeat, the barriers remain, and the tensions in which we are involved by them remain, but in the light of the forgiveness of God we know that the unity of mankind is the reality which transcends them, and so we take courage to witness to that reality in the midst of a world which (ourselves included) constantly denies it. What such a witness means in terms of the world situation which at the present moment confronts us, it is beyond the scope of this paper to enquire. That it involves some very practical decisions in the sphere of social and international relationships is very certain. In this context it is not inappropriate to quote the lines of William Blake:

> '(But) vain the sword and vain the bow,
> They never can work war's overthrow;
> The hermit's prayer and the widow's tear
> Alone can save the world from fear.'[6]

Cabinet ministers would, no doubt, call this heretical. Nevertheless, we will support the heresy of William Blake rather than the orthodoxy of Mr. Duff Cooper.

Blake's last line is a fitting conclusion to this paper, for fear lies near the heart and centre of sin. Fear drives man to every form of lawlessness, self-destruction, and selfishness. In the life and death of Jesus Christ there shines the love which casts out fear. This would seem to be our ultimate belief about sin and forgiveness.

[6] Quoted in *Hibbert Journal*, July, 1936. Article by Stephen Hobhouse.

PRAYER

By the Very Rev. W. R. Inge, D.D., F.B.A., K.C.V.O.

I AM to speak to you about Prayer. I think I may assume two things; first, that every one of those who hear me engages in private prayer as a daily habit, and could not imagine how any religion could subsist without it; and second, that we all at times feel perplexed as to what prayer actually is and does.

There is no subject on which Christ spoke with more downright explicitness than on the efficacy of prayer. 'All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them.' 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He shall give it you.' 'Everyone that asketh receiveth.'

These very definite promises seem to be contradicted by common experience. Most of us would say that they have been contradicted by our own experience. Hence the problem which troubles us all at times. It is a vital question, for if prayer has no efficacy we must give up not only our trust in the plain words of Christ, but all practice of religion. For if prayer has no result, no one would care to pray; and without prayer there can be no religion. Prayer is the very breathing of religion, its most essential and characteristic activity.

Let us then ask ourselves what prayer is in itself. It is the mystical act *par excellence*, and is common to all religious persons, even the most unmystical. It consists of a lifting up of the soul to God (this definition, usually ascribed to St. Thomas Aquinas, is really as old as St. Basil). A lifting up of the soul to God; that is one side of it; and a descent of the Spirit of God into the human soul; that is the other side of it. If either of these is absent, there is no true prayer. The Johannine Christ clearly lays down the condition for effectual prayer. 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.' As St. Paul says, 'The Spirit makes intercession for us,' and 'helps our infirmities.' Wherever there is true prayer it consists of these two elements and no others.

Our President has pointed out that there can be no true

prayer except to a God who is both immanent and transcendent. A purely immanent Deity, indistinguishable from our own best selves, is not a possible object of adoration, and adoration, as von Hügel and others have insisted, is the supreme act in prayer. On the other side, if God were purely transcendent, no communion with Him would be possible. God is infinitely far above us, and yet we can commune with Him. This can only be if the Spirit of God prays in us. Not all prayers, of course, are so inspired; but those that are not 'never to heaven go,' as the King in *Hamlet* says. The thought that in real prayer the Holy Spirit is actually bearing witness with our spirit, praying with, through, and for us is infinitely solemn, and we dare not forget the warnings that that divine presence can dwell only in a purified heart. We may grieve the Spirit, we may quench the Spirit, in the last resort we may even blaspheme against the Spirit. Dryness in prayer is not always a penalty, but often it is; and it is not our state of mind while we are on our knees that is responsible for it, but what has gone before.

This conception of prayer is both wider and narrower than the popular idea of what prayer is. It rules out many unhallowed petitions in which the Spirit of God has no part. But it includes much that is not petition at all. If our prayers are entirely or almost entirely petitions, they fall very short of what all the masters of the spiritual life tell us that prayer ought to be. Thanksgiving, intercession, meditation, contemplation, adoration, and orison or silent prayer, are all enumerated as parts of prayer. Those who have found the silent yearning of the soul, which is in truth a preparation of the channels through which grace is to flow, the most fruitful method of prayer, can appeal to many authorities; but I think the use of set forms, morning and evening, ought not to be discontinued. I strongly recommend the beautiful old office of compline for our evening prayer, at bed-time.

The old proverb, *Laborare est orare*, and Hegel's *Das Denken ist auch Gottesdienst*, extend the province of prayer still further. If we remember St. Paul's words, 'Whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God'; if we perform the duties of our daily round sacramentally, as it were, then our activity may be called an acted prayer, even though the

mind may not at the time be turned directly to thoughts of God. Here it will be seen that we have departed far from the idea that prayer is merely petition.

If we ask next, why do men pray? the simple answer is, because they cannot help it. Man has always been a praying creature, though in primitive societies prayer is extremely crude and superstitious. In this case, as in almost every other, we must observe Aristotle's canon that the *nature* of anything is its complete development. By their fruits, not by their roots, we shall know them. Prayer is born of two opposite states of mind, the sense of alienation from the unseen Power which surrounds us and controls our fate, and the desire for communion with it. We desire to know the will of God, to understand and co-operate with Him, not blindly to oppose Him. We desire to open out our hearts and minds that He may fill them. This desire, and the effort to which it gives rise, is spontaneous and natural; it is its own justification and satisfaction. It is justified, and it brings satisfaction, because, as Augustine says in the most familiar words he ever wrote, 'Thou, O God, hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are unquiet until they rest in Thee.' The spiritual world is there all the time, encircling and penetrating us. And it is something more than an atmosphere. The word personality is no doubt very inadequate to describe the nature of God; He is not a Person among other persons. But His nature is not *less* than personal; if we think of Him as impersonal we are limiting Him still more. Especially in prayer, the best way is to think of Him quite simply as One who hears what we say, and sometimes gives us an answer which we think we can recognize as an answer. But we cannot really draw a line between the prayer and its answer. It is a common mistake to wait for and expect some irruption of the divine into our hearts which we can recognize as not our own. That is not the normal way in which the divine Spirit acts upon us. On the Godward side the gates of personality are always open. God redeems and saves us by imparting Himself to us; by changing our wills, enlightening our understandings, and quickening our affections.

In so far as prayer is loving intercourse or reverent homage, or thanksgiving, or meditation on the revealed attributes of God, or contrition for sin, it is meaningless to ask whether it is effica-

cious. No one doubts that as an exercise it deepens the character, strengthens the will, purifies the affections, and brings peace, rest, and blessedness. These things are not in dispute. We in this Society have no wish to shirk any real difficulties, and I do not mean to shirk them. But I have thought it worth while to emphasize that when we discuss the efficacy of prayer in the narrow sense in which the phrase is commonly used, we are not dealing with prayer as a whole, or raising any questions about the value of a habit of prayer. That prayer in the wider sense is valuable we all admit. It is only a particular kind of effect, which has been supposed to follow from a particular kind of prayer, which is in dispute.

Let us go back to the words of Christ. They certainly seem to promise that our petitions, of whatever kind, will be granted if made in the name of Christ. Many children, and perhaps some grown people, think that if we add to our petitions, 'through Jesus Christ our Lord,' or 'for Jesus Christ's sake,' God has promised to grant them. We are allowed to use the name of Christ as a man might use the name of a friend to back a bill. To this there is a plain answer. To a Jew the name of God means more than a mere appellation. Many passages in the Old Testament make this clear. It is not a quibble to say that in the name of Christ means in the spirit of Christ, to pray as He prayed. And when we think, for example, of His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, we observe three things; first, that the prayer was for deliverance from physical suffering; next, that it was conditional on its being in accordance with the will of God; and finally, that it was not granted in the literal sense. The same may be said of St. Paul's petition to be relieved from the 'stake in the flesh.' Further, we may remember the prohibition of vain repetitions in the Sermon on the Mount, with the reason given. 'Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him.'

There has been a change in our time towards greater caution and diffidence in petition. We pray with less assertiveness than our grandparents did, and probably on an average we pray less than they did, at any rate for earthly favours. The coroner who directed his jury to bring in a verdict of 'died by act of God,' if they could find no 'rational explanation' of the death, repre-

sented a way of thinking which is much less common than it used to be. The old dualism of natural and supernatural, of law and miracle, which is still maintained over a great part of Christendom, is increasingly unwelcome to us. The notion that the world is governed by natural laws which may be suspended or modified at any time by divine intervention, is felt to be one of the least satisfactory of philosophies. This change has inevitably altered our conception of the nature of prayer. Old-fashioned exhortations about 'wrestling Jacob,' and 'besieging the mercy-seat' are seldom now applied to petitions for earthly blessings.

Emerson speaks of the childlike confidence in the compelling power of prayer which he had met with in his youth. 'The minister at Sudbury being at the Thursday lecture at Boston heard the officiating clergyman praying for rain. As soon as the service was over he went to the officiating minister and said, "You Boston ministers, as soon as a tulip wilts under your windows, go to church and pray for rain, until all Concord and Sudbury are under water."' Not long ago, during an eruption of Mount Etna, the inhabitants of the village of Castiglione, preceded by their priest, carried a wonder-working image of St. Egidio to the place of danger, and adjured the lava to change its direction and flow towards the neighbouring village of Linguaglossa. The people of Linguaglossa, having no miraculous image, resorted to the arm of flesh. The combatants were separated by the police. We cannot pray like this now: it seems to us both wrong and foolish. As long as it was doubtful whether an outbreak of cholera in a town was caused by an infected water-supply or by the blasphemies of an infidel mayor, science was paralysed. Even the prayers in the Prayer Book for rain and fine weather are seldom used, and are rather disliked by an educated congregation. We know that the medicine-men in savage Africa are in request as rain-makers, and that this superstition is not quite extinct even in Europe; but we should be ashamed to believe it.

Are we then not to pray for earthly things at all? That is not St. Paul's advice. 'In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your bequests be made known unto God.' To make our wishes known, and to demand that they shall be gratified, are different things. The more we know about the causes

of climatic phenomena, the less likely we are even to dream of changing them in order to save our hay-crop, or to secure a fine day for our garden-party.

But can we consistently give up praying for rain with the expectation of altering the weather for our benefit, and continue to pray for the recovery of a relation or friend in sickness? Knowledge has been enlarged in this field also during our life-time. We know something about microbes; how can they be affected by our prayers? Some of you may remember that a controversy was once carried on in two monthly reviews about the efficacy of prayer. It was proposed to test the external value of prayer by experimenting on hospital patients. The occupants of one ward of a hospital were to be the subjects for a stated period of special intercession by a large body of the faithful, while those in the other wards were to be left to the general prayers of the Church. A comparison of the death-rates would, it was suggested, decide once for all whether special prayers have any effect or not. The controversy was not conducted in a very edifying manner. The spokesmen on the orthodox side expressed great indignation, and seemed to evade what was really a perfectly fair and plain question, namely, Does prayer have any external effect such as can be measured by statistical methods? Supposing that those who offered petitions for the recovery of the patients in the selected ward were not actuated by any wish to 'tempt God'—supposing that they were animated by pure and simple faith—supposing that all the conditions for prevailing prayer were fulfilled—would any results follow of which a physician or a life-insurance company ought to take notice? Is the husband of a loving and prayerful wife a 'better life,' from the point of view of life-insurance, than a man who has no Christian relatives anxious for the prolongation of his existence? These are questions which a man may surely ask without impiety, and they are questions which a statistical inquiry alone could answer. I would go further and say that they are questions on which a Christian ought to have some opinion. I suppose I should be right in saying that the teaching of old-fashioned Evangelicals, both in the Anglican Church and outside it, was decidedly in favour of the belief that prayer can alter events; and I believe that many would shrink from an impartial test, because they wish

to believe that it does, but are afraid that their belief would not stand investigation.

Let me then say candidly that I do not believe that the result of such an investigation would be agreeable to the old-fashioned believer. Of course I put aside considerations which appear to me to be evasive, such as the encouragement given to the sufferer by knowing that his friends were praying for him. We want to know whether any direct external influence can be traced. And I fear that, as a matter of experience, it cannot.

The deterministic argument against prayer does not seem to me conclusive. It may be that all consequences are indisolubly linked to their antecedents; but still it does not follow that prayer cannot be an efficient cause. If God foreknew the microbes, He also foreknew the prayer. Both alike are part of the warp and woof out of which the world's history is woven. We cannot say offhand that there is and can be no connection between the course of the disease and the prayer that the disease may take a favourable turn. It is, I think, a matter which must be decided by evidence, and I believe the evidence is negative.

If we face this fairly and without evasive reservation, we shall then be able to ask ourselves whether we would really have it otherwise. The answer will depend a good deal on what we believe about pain and death. It is not only Christian scientists who find the existence of suffering in the world a greater trial to their faith than the existence of sin. There are many who think that if God is good it cannot be His will that His creatures should suffer and die. Well, Christianity is surely at one with science in holding that death is as natural and beneficent as life, being in fact the necessary condition of the renewal of life and youth in the world. All things that are born have but a short time to live, and then they turn again to their dust. This is God's law; why should we rebel against it? 'Into the breast that gives the rose shall I with shuddering fall?' 'Glad did I live and gladly die, and I laid me down with a will.' Nor is it natural or possible that all creatures shall live out their span of life. There is nothing shocking in early death; 'whom the gods love die young.' I cannot think that even when we are in agonised anxiety we should really wish to play Providence. I think that at such times most of us are really content to repeat the prayer of Christ,

'Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt.' There is here no attempt, no wish, to control events or to alter His wise and merciful will.

If we think that we should like to control events by our prayers, let us consider how we should like the idea of our neighbour being able to control them by his. I once had a letter from a good lady who said, 'I am praying for your death. I have been very successful in two other cases.'

If then we frankly give up the desire to alter physical laws, what are we to say about prayer for spiritual things? We think that spiritual law is less rigorous; but is this only our ignorance? If we knew all, should we find the same inexorable law as in the physical world? This is a difficult question. But I believe myself that the laws of spirit are different. I believe that the system under which we live is not a soulless mechanism, but a great system of ends — a system of vital purposes which have a freedom and elasticity far greater than the analogy of the natural sciences would lead us to suppose. Nature appears mechanical because it is uniform; but how if the uniformity be due simply to the steadiness and even operation of the divine will, which does not need to change because it never makes a mistake? Natural law is God's way of doing things. If a clock goes uniformly, we do not assume that it made itself, whereas a clock that goes badly and needs shaking and altering the hands gives evidence of a conscious mind. I have already said that as a matter of evidence I do not believe in special providences and miracles wrought by prayer in the field of nature. But when we come to spirit the evidence seems to be the other way, and I attach no value to *a priori* arguments against it. It is the old puzzle of determinism and free will — very perplexing theoretically, but not practically.

The soul grows and expands under a régime of prayer as the body under a course of good food and exercise. And though in praying for earthly blessings we may think it better to reduce mere petition to a minimum, in praying for spiritual graces we do ask fervently that something may be given us. We may do so without scruple, because we know 'this is the will of God, even our sanctification.' In praying for the gifts of the Spirit, we know that He to whom we pray inspires the prayer, and can

grant it, for what we are asking Him to give us is Himself. And I doubt if anyone who has made a practice of this kind of prayer has ever given it up because he has found it useless.

The question about intercession for spiritual graces to be granted to others is not quite so easily answered. But I am far from thinking that such prayers are necessarily unavailing. The mysteries of personality are unfathomable. In the psychology of St. Paul's Epistles, which has been the Christian psychology generally, while the life of the *psyche* seems to be purely individual, that of the *pneuma* seems to be super-individual; 'we are all made to drink into one Spirit.' I certainly do not think that we need do violence to our natural instincts by refusing to pray for others, or to doubt that our prayers may really help them.

Let me sum up what I have been saying by a few aphorisms.

Providence does not begin where nature leaves off.

Things are not specially 'providential' because they suit our convenience.

It is God's will that His creatures should have many troubles to bear, and that they should die.

If the order of nature is not broken by so-called supernatural interventions, the probable reason is that the Author of nature is satisfied with the regular operation of His own laws.

'He who rises from his knees a better man, his prayer has been granted.' This is from George Meredith, who no doubt believed that the value of prayer is purely subjective. But it is a good saying, as far as it goes.

'Prayer is the elevation of the mind to God.' Do not be content with any narrower definition, and remember that this act of recollection may be performed at any time, and should always be performed when we are beginning any new task. The soldier's prayer in going into action, 'Lord, if at any time to-day I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me,' is a good model.

'If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.' But the answer may be, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.'

'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.'

IMMORTALITY

By the Rev. G. F. Woods, M.A., Tutor of Ripon Hall, Oxford.

IF we believe in the Fatherhood of God, we are bound to believe that God the Father will neither permit nor desire His children to perish. To allow His children to perish would be a direct denial of His Fatherhood. It is logically impossible to believe in the Christian God and to disbelieve in personal immortality. To deny personal immortality is to deny the Christian view of God. Belief in the Love of God necessarily implies not only that the personality will survive death, but that the nature of the survival will be an expression of the Love of God. Belief in personal immortality is not an optional but an essential element in the Christian Faith. As Churchmen, we do not approach immortality as an open question, but as a question open to consideration. The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to consider whether any good reason has appeared why we should not retain our present faith and what considerations there are which may still dispose us to retain it.

What is the meaning of immortality? To be immortal means to be not subject to death. It is only applicable to what appears to have life and appears to die. In everyday speech, immortality is taken to mean the state of survival after death, but the primary meaning is simply the capacity to survive death. In the simplest meaning, immortality is not a possible future state of the individual soul but a present characteristic of a being which will survive death. As an impractical scheme is impractical before it is put into practice, so an immortal being is immortal before it reaches death. It does not become immortal: it is immortal. For an immortal being, death is not the beginning, but the revelation, of its immortality. In affirming immortality of a being, we are making an affirmation about its present nature. Our anticipations only disclose a characteristic of our view of the present nature of the soul. In believing that the soul is capable of surviving death, we must be convinced that the soul is finally independent of whatever structure death disintegrates.

Belief in immortality is not primarily a belief about the future but a present belief that, whatever the soul may be, it is neither identical with nor wholly dependent on the physical body. This rejection of any physical basis of the soul is only an instance of the rejection of all metaphysical views of the soul which would preclude survival. No stable hope of survival can evade the question of the metaphysical status of the soul.

How then are we to determine the present metaphysical status of the soul? This is a sufficiently daunting enquiry. To discuss all possible views of the real status of the soul is clearly impossible and inappropriate, but I believe it is possible to show that we cannot accept as rational any metaphysic which reduces the soul to an illusion. It is also possible, I believe, to give some indication why these strictly irrational metaphysics persist in arising. In enquiring what is the present metaphysical status of the soul, what do we mean by metaphysical status? The idea of status suggests something standing in relation to something else. Metaphysical status suggests the standing of something in relation to the ultimate. The ultimate in each metaphysic is some distinguishable element in our experience, which we have taken to be ultimate and through which we are seeking to explain the rest of our experience. Having taken some element as basic, we endeavour to account for the remainder in terms of the selected element. We then guage the metaphysical status of anything by its relation to what we have taken to be ultimate. We naturally tend to avoid accepting more than one ultimate, because to have more than one leaves us with two inexplicables, neither of which is reducible to a form of the other. Our search for coherence inevitably involves a search for a single ultimate. Now, we can assume that the substance of what is ultimate is either personal or impersonal, or something which is neither. As our natural preference is always to take only one of these possibilities and, as something which is neither personal nor impersonal is unintelligible to us, we tend to adopt either a personal or an impersonal ultimate. It follows that in judging the metaphysical status of the soul, we always tend to make the judgment on the basis of a personal or an impersonal ultimate. The greater the degree of coherence in our metaphysic, the greater will be our tendency to adopt a wholly personal or wholly

impersonal metaphysic. How is this crucial choice made? In selecting an element from our experience there is an easy but fatal tendency to select anything except ourselves who have the experience. As the observer cannot stand behind his own standpoint, he can easily fail to observe himself. We are apt to take the body, or ideas, or instincts, or reason, or some other distinguishable object of experience as the basic material out of which persons are constructed. We have a natural inclination to attempt to explain the person in terms of his impersonal possessions. If we succumb to this perennial temptation, we shall follow the road which leads to some form of impersonalism. This road ends in the denial of personal immortality, because, in any impersonal metaphysic, there is no hope of survival after the dissolution of the impersonal components. If we identify the real with the impersonal, we shall naturally discover the final unreality of the personal. Impersonalism precludes immortality.

To admit the ease of a drift towards impersonalism is very different from admitting impersonalism to be true. Impersonalism, if it be an easy mistake, is still a mistake. We clearly cannot examine the adequacy of impersonalism as an explanation of the whole known world process, but we are justified in limiting our enquiry to the crucial test of its sufficiency in explaining the basis of personality. A metaphysic which fails to explain personality, fails to explain the most significant feature of our experience. One of the simplest forms of impersonalism is Materialism, which assumes that only the material is ultimate. However our understanding of the material is modified by scientific research, until the impersonality of the material is discarded, Materialism remains an instance of those metaphysics in which personality is taken to be the outcome of something which is not personal. Whatever the precise form of impersonalism, can we really think that personality has an impersonal basis? It seems unthinkable that any accumulation of impersonal entities can be a person. Impersonal entities which are not aware either of themselves or of anything else cannot singly or in association be thought to be a self-conscious person. We may imagine increasing complexity of arrangement but not awareness of the arrangement by the impersonal elements which compose

it. The records of a recording apparatus are not known records until they are studied by a person who is essentially other than the apparatus. We may imagine an impersonal process in operation, but we cannot imagine such a process being conscious of itself. It is incredible that impersonal entities which cannot discriminate between values, can be the foundation of persons sensitive to the noblest spiritual values. Structures composed of the impersonal, however intricate or microscopic, cannot be thought to be personal. We cannot really believe personal life to be maintained by an impersonal dead world. It is undeniable that the soul is greatly influenced by the body, but we reject as unthinkable any suggestion that the soul is identical with or totally dependent on the body, in so far as the body may be composed of impersonal elements.

If we turn from impersonalism and endeavour to express the metaphysical status of the soul in personal terms, our difficulties are not at an end. Many of the terms by which the life of the soul is habitually described are full of spatial imagery. The soul's 'centre' or the 'basis' of the soul are in danger of introducing a sort of verbal materialism. A far more serious point is that in speaking of 'the' soul, we have ignored the unique individuality of each particular soul. Our easy inclination to ignore individuality is the natural result of our thinking, which in order to be thought has to be in generalizations. For the purpose of simplicity in thinking, we naturally tend to use terms which overlook the fact of individuality. 'The' soul is the abstract soul of no one in particular. Like the average man, it is an abstraction from the plurality of individual souls. Moreover, the abstract soul is of no particular person at no particular time. In speaking of 'the' soul, we have ignored not only individuality but real development in the individual. The outcome of this abstract thinking is to conceive that each person has a soul, which is an active spiritual entity differing only numerically from other similar souls and never losing its similarity through real development. If this is the true metaphysical status of the soul, only an anonymous immortality can be expected. But it is incredible how, upon such a metaphysical basis, individuality and personal development could arise. It is more probable to think that this metaphysic reduces individuality and individual development to

illusions, because they have been logically eliminated from the start. We cannot believe, and there appears no good reason to believe, that the metaphysical nature of each soul is a spiritual being devoid of individuality and incapable of real spiritual development. For similar reasons, we feel bound to reject any metaphysic in terms of elements abstracted from the soul and universalized. The soul is, for instance, more than its rational element, and personality is more than the immortality of the rational element. The abstraction of elements which souls share in common does not account for the plurality of individual souls, which are conscious of holding the element in common. We are always in danger of slipping towards the impersonalism, which we have resolved to avoid.

It appears as though all attempts to account for personality in terms less than personal are bound to be unsatisfactory. They are bound to be unsatisfactory, because they have from the outset, for some reason or another, ignored essential features of personality. We deny the reality of personality in so far as we interpret it in terms less than personal. Full interpretation in impersonal terms is impossible because, as an interpretative term, 'the impersonal' is simply a negation of the personal. From this logical negation of the personal, we cannot logically deduce or reasonably assume the characteristics of our personal nature. It cannot avoid becoming a confusing attempt to explain the known by the less known. Impersonalism will always be with us, but it appears that, where the basis of personality is in question, we cannot really go deeper than personality. Personality is that in terms of which we interpret. We cannot interpret personality in terms other than personal. We cannot believe the impersonal metaphysics, which we have various natural inclinations to formulate.

What is the significance of the rejection of all impersonal metaphysics for the question of immortality? It means that we are released from all arguments against the possibility of survival, which rest upon attributing an impersonal basis to the soul. We have no reason to disbelieve in the possibility of survival on the grounds of any metaphysic which we believe to be the outcome of some form of undue abstraction and to be, in any case, an unthinkable basis of this present life. In fearing any

form of impersonalism, we are fearing the ghosts of ourselves which we have created out of ourselves. Some may be willing to affirm that an entity which cannot rationally be derived from anything other than itself, must be believed to be an ultimate constituent of reality and can, therefore, never be thought to pass away, but it is more cautious to confine ourselves to the affirmation that we need not sacrifice our hope of immortality on the grounds of impersonal metaphysics which we cannot believe to be true.

In enquiring what may be the metaphysical nature of the world process which includes ourselves, we have not so far raised the question of the purpose of the whole process. We have not sought the sufficient reason why it should be what it is. We have considered the question 'What is it?' but not 'Why is it?' We have sought the facts but not the value of the facts. We have reflected upon the thinkable nature of an ultimate capable of accounting for personality, but we have not enquired, why whatever ultimate is possible should be what it is nor what purpose we could see in the development of personality. This enquiry for purpose cannot be suppressed. To trace the nature of a creative process without seeking a reason for the process does not satisfy the human mind. We are bound to ask not only what is the nature of reality, but what is the purpose of reality. For the purpose of greater simplicity in treatment, it is possible to distinguish the questions of nature and purpose, but we cannot permanently rest satisfied with an answer only to the first question. As we are in these days so accustomed to specialized enquiries, we are all too ready to accept as final the departmental answer of the specialist. These answers will satisfy us in so far as we occupy the position of the specialist, but it will never suppress our natural desire to know not only the facts but the reason for the facts. Even the specialist cannot quite abolish human nature. We inevitably desire not only to know, but to know the reason why. The enquiries for nature and purpose are an indivisible demand of the human personality seeking a satisfactory metaphysic. These enquiries may not be satisfied, but they cannot be divorced or eliminated.

If in our metaphysic we inevitably enquire for the reason or purpose, what form of purpose has meaning for us? Our concern

at the moment is not what evidence of purpose we actually see in the world process, but what form of purpose can have real meaning for us. We are not here seeking evidence of purpose, but we are seeking to know what purpose means for us, in order that we may know what constitutes evidence of purpose. We clearly cannot be satisfied with the answer that there is no purpose at all. Nor can we be satisfied with the answer that there is a purpose but one which is not intelligible to us. Each in its own way is an answer that there is no answer. Our only satisfaction lies in purposes which are substantially intelligible to human experience. We experience a sense of finality in our enquiry only when we can see that what is taking place is fulfilling purposes which we approve. But what are purposes and what are the purposes of which we approve? Purposes are meaningless apart from personality. A totally impersonal world must be devoid of purpose. Only persons can have purposes. What we value in human purpose is the good person who has formed and is acting according to a good purpose. The abstract idea of a good purpose has a value of its own as the good act of a human mind, but what we principally value is the person who expresses the good purpose in good acts. The value is in the person, whose particular good acts are the response of a good will to the changing requirements of circumstances. Human value is not simply illustrated in personality, it is true personality. True personality is not simply the vehicle for goodness, it is the essence of goodness. Human values cannot be detached from persons and remain values. Value is value in being. Human value is good persons who are in being. Now, if purposes of which we can approve are intelligible to us only in terms of human value and if human value is essentially true personality, the form of purpose which can satisfy us must include the development and preservation of true personality. This need not be the only purpose of any world process, but we are bound to deny the presence of intelligible purpose where personality does not survive. We can willingly accept no metaphysic as satisfactory which does not account for the presence and include the preservation of personality.

This contention that we cannot attribute rational purpose to a world process which does not preserve personality is frequently

denied or not explicitly affirmed. There is a common illusion that our sense of purpose can be satisfied in this life, especially if this present life is spent in the service of the next generation. This illusion, rather curiously, is encouraged by arguments for immortality based on the tragic injustices and misfortunes of human life. Such arguments are in danger of suggesting that only lives of misfortune call for immortality. They give the erroneous impression that our search for purpose would be disappointed only if the personalities of the unfortunate perished. They suggest that a fortunate life would not require the compensation of immortality. This is not so. These tragic cases only reveal, with special clarity, the value which we place on all personality. The annihilation of any personality, whether fortunate or unfortunate, is a loss for which we can feel no sufficient reason. It is no compensation for the permanent loss of a friend to consider that his life was not unhappy or that we possess other friends. If each person is of unique value, the only purpose which can fully satisfy us must include the preservation of whatever is valuable in each personality. In so far as the purpose consists in human values and as human values are real only in persons, the loss of a single person is a loss of real value. It is a loss not only of his realized capacities but of the unrealized capacities which an infinite life could develop. Our search for purpose can be satisfied in no finite life of the soul because the annihilation of any personal life would contradict the essential element in human purpose, which is the development and preservation of personal life. Nor can our sense of purpose be fully satisfied by attaching value only to the oncoming generation and being, consciously or unconsciously, indifferent to the fate of the present generation. Humanism is in many ways a noble creed but, in so far as it denies personal immortality, it cannot provide a purpose which is rationally fully satisfactory. It cannot provide a fully rational purpose because, if we believe each particular person to be of unique value, we cannot believe that any generation of persons can compensate for the loss of the previous generations. If it is unthinkable that one person can really take the place of another, no generation of persons can take the place of another generation of persons. A human institution can be maintained by a new set of officers but, if the

previous officers have ceased to be, there is a loss, which makes it impossible to recognize the process as fully rational. Though the service of other generations than our own is a magnificent maxim of practical conduct, we shall be bound to judge the process irrational, if each person who does this service is destined to be annihilated. A process that progressively annihilates the only elements which, in our human understanding, have value, cannot by us be termed a fully rational process. Without immortality, human history is the perpetuation of the finally pointless. This illusion that our sense of purpose can be fully satisfied in service of the next generation is due to a rather noble error of taking one generation as of purely instrumental value to the next. What is taken to be of instrumental value must serve what is taken to be of intrinsic value. When the present generation is taken to be of solely instrumental value to the next generation and the next generations in succession to be of solely instrumental value to their following generations, a process is started which may be repeated indefinitely. If the process continued for ever, it would be a pointless process of instruments with no purpose. Indeed, if our only understanding of purpose is in terms of personality, there is no purpose in which we can reduce all persons to the status of means. We cannot see meaning in a process consisting solely of means without end. If, on the other hand, the process did not continue for ever, the final generation, being, by definition, unable to be of instrumental value to any later generation, and in order to confer instrumental value on its predecessors, would have to be of intrinsic value. But if personality in the final generation is of intrinsic value, it seems illogical to deny the intrinsic value of personality in the previous generations. If personality is of intrinsic value, the present generation has a similar claim to value as the later generations. In any case, if the final generation ceases to be, the process is finally irrational. Estimating value in terms of instrumental value only postpones the decision as to what we mean by intrinsic value. Personal service implies the value of persons, including both the server and the served. If in order to find any meaning in the process it is necessary to admit the intrinsic value of personality, it is also necessary to admit that the process is irrational, if the personalities perish. For prac-

tical purposes, they may find in personal service a purpose for themselves but not for the world process which consumes them.

Combining the results of our discussion, up to this point, we have given some of our reasons for rejecting all forms of impersonal metaphysic which would have precluded immortality and we have outlined our reasons for rejecting all alternatives to personal immortality which might claim to provide a fully rational purpose for the world. Each is rejected as unthinkable, if the world is fully rational. We cannot really think that personality has an essentially impersonal basis and we cannot really approve a purpose which eliminates personality. The rejection of all impersonal metaphysics and the rejection of all forms of purpose which exclude personal immortality are elements in any faith in the full rationality of the world. No metaphysic which suggests an impersonal basis of personality or rejects personal immortality can fully satisfy a person. Full satisfaction requires not simply survival but a form of life and environment in which whatever is valuable in personality is preserved and developed. Survival, which resembles a living death in a lifeless world, cannot be acceptable as a reasonable purpose for the world process. It is the expression in the future of an inadequate metaphysic of personality in the present. What may appear to some as a crude bias against all forms of impersonalism and in favour of personal immortality is, in fact, a faith that the world is fully rational. To deny personal immortality is to deny the full rationality of the world.

We may agree that any transition from the impersonal to the personal is unintelligible to us and that the purpose of any process which annihilates personality is unintelligible to us, but the question immediately arises whether the world process is in fact rational. What grounds have we for hoping that the world process will satisfy the demands of our rational nature? Can we prove the full rationality of the world? To give a logically complete proof of the full rationality is impossible. It is impossible, because arguments for rationality based on evidence drawn from our experience seem to utilize the very faith which they seek to prove. It is contended, for example, that the progress of scientific knowledge reasonably proves that the world is in fundamental accord, at least with our scientific understanding. We could not,

it is argued, so fully understand a process or chaos totally alien to our minds. To assume that only a reasonable process is capable of reasonable understanding is a very reasonable assumption, but it is an act of faith. It must be true in a reasonable world, but to assume that the world process is fundamentally reasonable is to assume exactly what we desired to prove. Another common argument for the rationality of the world is that an irrational person could not have produced the characteristics of human nature. The emergence of life and mind and personality are, it is claimed, incredible out of a process which is dead, mindless, and impersonal. It is, certainly, unthinkable in any reasonable world process, but the argument carries no weight with anyone who is willing to believe that the unthinkable may have taken place. Arguments from characteristics of the process to an affirmation of its fundamental rationality all assume that everything has a reasonable explanation. Without the basic faith that the improbable and the unthinkable did not occur, these arguments have no persuasive power. Faith in the reasonableness of the world is implicit in every thought about it. It is essentially an act of reasonable faith. Each form of interpretation seeks to make its own form of progress. When progress is slow, there is a temptation to abandon the fundamental act of faith upon which all particular enquiries ultimately rest. Being an act of faith, it cannot be forced upon anyone. It is always possible to surrender this faith and to call vainly for evidence, which without the act of faith can have no metaphysical significance. The consequences are fatal to all further thinking about the nature and purpose of the world. Without a faith that our minds will understand and that the world is capable of being understood, the reason for further search disappears. Faith in the fullest rationality of the world is an indispensable presupposition of our thinking about it. By trusting our reason in the widest sense, we show a faith that the world has a nature and a purpose, which will finally be intelligible to us. If we are to think of the world, we must think of it as rational. Now, if our earlier argument is sound, faith in the full rationality of the world includes a faith in personal immortality. Our contention was that personal immortality was an essential element in full rationality. In brief, we cannot relinquish a faith in personal

immortality without relinquishing our faith in the full rationality of the world, and we cannot relinquish our faith in the full rationality of the world without suppressing the natural enquiries of the human mind. Faith in immortality is not based on a precarious balancing of probabilities, but is implicit in the basic assumption of the full rationality of the world. This assumption by its very nature cannot be proved, because it is the necessary presupposition of our natural endeavour fully to understand the world.

Those who, on other grounds, believe in personal immortality must be willing to consider the claims of psychic evidence for survival. No one can dismiss the whole of the alleged evidence as due to fraud. What is not due to fraud inevitably admits of a number of explanations. Much may, for instance, be due to unconscious telepathy. What remains can only prove survival up to the moment of the last communication. In any case, the significance of the evidence rests on the assumption of the rationality of the world, which is itself a sufficient basis for hope. Dr. William Brown in the Drew Memorial Lecture, 1935, gives as his opinion, that 'The science of psychical research is an essential science in the sense that we should investigate any kind of evidence, but take care to investigate it in a scientific way. We must remember also, that whatever evidence we may find for the continued existence of the mind after death does not necessarily prove immortality, nor does it necessarily help us on the moral and religious side.'

Whatever our attitude towards psychic evidence, we cannot avoid thinking of personal immortality in terms which are drawn by analogy from this present life. We can imagine another life only in images drawn from our present experience. As no one suggests that a life of personal immortality is either totally like, or totally unlike, the present life, the imagination selects elements of our personal experience, which are likely constituents of any future experience. The important point is the principle of selection. The soundest policy is to believe that whatever the full rationality of the world requires will be maintained. This faith implies conditions under which each soul may reach and retain perfection.

The Christian Faith and the faith in the full rationality of

the world, both imply personal immortality, because ultimately they are two names for the same faith. The Christian Hope is usually the profounder form, because usually it alone recognizes that we cannot accept as fully rational any treatment of persons which is less than the Love of God. The belief in personal immortality always remains an act of faith but, far from being contrary to reason, it is a natural faith of any human mind which refuses to suppress the normal enquiries of its nature.

WHY FORMULATE OUR BELIEFS?

By the Rev. Gamaliel Milner, M.A., Vicar of Kirby Fleetham.

WHEN the illustrious Paley was an undergraduate one of the theses in support of which he proposed to dispute was, that the eternity of punishments is contrary to the Divine Attributes. Finding that this topic would give offence to the Master of his college, he went to Dr. Watson, the Moderator, to get it changed. Dr. Watson told him that he might amend the proposition by the insertion of a 'not,' and Paley defended the position that 'The Eternity of Punishments is *not* contrary to the Divine Attributes.' The story is sometimes quoted as indicating a certain versatility, a lawyer-like readiness to speak to any brief, in the future apologist for Christianity. Probably, however, Paley did not entirely recast his arguments; he was, no doubt, equal to making an affirmative look very like a negative. So, to compare great things with small, I might, perhaps, find it easier to write in favour of the thesis, 'Why we should not formulate our beliefs.' In disputes conducted according to the rules of the scholastic logic, there were three answers which could be returned to any question: *affirmative*, yes; *negative*, no; *distinguo*, that depends. I choose the third.

For the individual it is excellent mental discipline to try to formulate his opinions. We need to-day more, not less, controversy; half the confusion in our world is due to the acceptance of formulas, ambiguous phrases, which enable people to use the same words while meaning quite different things. When Socrates entered upon his divine mission, he began by cross-questioning his contemporaries, especially those among them who appeared the wisest — statesmen, poets, artists, sophists — as to what they really believed. He found in the Athenians of the fifth century B.C., as, if he were alive to-day, he would find in Englishmen or Americans of the twentieth century A.D., a great mass of inconsistent and often self-contradictory opinions. They were leading an unexamined life. For thirty years he cross-examined his fellow-citizens as to their beliefs, and he succeeded in arriving at certain conclusions of his own. He felt

that in his quest he was following the monitions of a god and benefitting the state. The Athenians in the mass did not see things in that light, and eventually they condemned him to death. The wonder, perhaps, was that he was allowed to go on so long. In the Middle Ages he would probably have got into the hands of the Inquisition, and instead of asking questions would have had to answer them under torture. If he had button-holed respectable citizens in modern London on their way to the Stock Exchange or the Test Match, he would have been peremptorily moved on by the police, and very possibly would have died in an asylum.

Mr. Sinclair Lewis gives the following account of the religion of his hero, a typical business man of the Middle West:

> 'If you had asked Babbitt what his religion was, he would have answered in sonorous Boosters'-Club rhetoric, "My religion is to serve my fellow-men, to honour my brother as myself, and to do my bit to make life happier for one and all." If you had pressed him for more detail, he would have announced, "I'm a member of the Presbyterian Church, and naturally, I accept its doctrines." If you had been so brutal as to go on, he would have protested, "There's no use discussing and arguing about religion; it just stirs up bad feeling."'

Was Socrates right in trying to get his fellow-men to define their beliefs? Undoubtedly, he gave an impetus to thought that has lasted to the present day. But we should remember the warning of Aristotle against demanding a greater accuracy in definition than the nature of the subject will admit of. Socrates went too far when he asked poets to define the principles on which they worked; Sophocles and Euripides could produce great tragedies, Pheidias divine statuary, though they could not say exactly how it was done. When we enter a mediaeval cathedral an involuntary reaction in favour of mediaeval religion, a reaction which we cannot dismiss as wholly irrational, seizes upon our minds. And as with the aesthetic so also with the morally sublime there is something which transcends the conscious intelligence; the best evidence for religion, it has been said, is a holy life.

If we examine our fellow-men, or better still ourselves, we often find that our real working creed is something widely different from that which we express with our lips. A clergyman's wife, after telling the Sunday School children that God is love, will often quite unblushingly declare that it always rains if she

has a garden-party, a statement which implies a much more primitive and deep-seated view of the divine character, that formulated by Solon in the words, 'The Powers above are given to envy.' Rose La Touche refused to marry Ruskin because he would not say that he loved God better than he loved her. If she had thought a minute she would have seen that his refusal to tell a lie to win her meant that he really did love God best. There is a story told of an officer at the time of the Indian Mutiny, who, though an avowed atheist, refused to purchase his life by publicly renouncing Christianity. 'It would be a damned ungentlemanly thing to do,' he said.

But though we are able to express only a part of what we think and feel, that is no reason why we should not express as much of ourselves as we can. Homer calls man 'articulate-speaking.' There is nothing more reactionary in the true sense of the word than the tendency so visible to-day to magnify the subconscious, the subliminal, the numinous. Nothing more surely foreshadows the downfall of civilization, the approach of another Dark Age, than talk about the bankruptcy of reason. We are often told that the next war will destroy our civilization; but civilizations do not really die of bombs or poison gas; those are only symptoms; civilizations die when they blow their brains out.

Should the Church formulate its beliefs? This is manifestly a very different question. We often talk of the mind of the Church, but the Church in sober fact is an amalgam of many minds, all of which, all, at any rate, which are in working order, tend to think differently. *Quot homines tot sententiae*. A creed, therefore, is in its nature a minimum statement of belief, often a compromise. And behind every creed there lurks a damnatory clause. This is true even of the vaguest creed of which I have ever heard, the Faith of the House of Commons. In the course of the debate on the right of the atheist Bradlaugh to affirm, a certain Member thus addressed the Chair: 'Mr. Speaker, I take it, that all of us believe in . . . well . . . in a Sort of a Something.' The implication was that as Mr. Bradlaugh didn't, he was not a fit and proper person to enter the Paradise of the House of Commons. Many churchgoers, I think, regard St. Athanasius as a bad-tempered sort of a person, who was not content with stating

his own belief at tedious length, but insisted on damning his neighbours. The fact is, of course, that a damnatory clause, an anathema, was what lawyers call common form in a creed. The Nicene Creed had its anathema like its successors. The Council of Ephesus, by the way, launched an anathema at anyone who should compose or use a new creed, a curse which has been, I fear, incurred by the Editor of the *Modern Churchman*, as well as by the author or authors unknown of the creed called that of St. Athanasius and by all those who use that formula. I am aware that the peculiar horror of the damnatory clauses lies in beliefs about the future life which are repudiated or toned down by most people at the present day. But creeds and articles have, or are meant to have, the effect of excluding those who do not accept them from Church membership or, at any rate, from the teaching office of the Church.

It is, I believe, a fact that the conception of a creed is no older than Christianity. Paganism had no dogmas. In Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* the sceptical point of view is presented by the head of the State Church, the Right Revd. Pontifex Maximus, Cotta. Since the seventh century B.C., indeed, religions in our sense had begun to emerge — prophetic Judaism in Israel, Zoroastrianism in Persia, Buddhism in India, the Mystery Cults in the Hellenistic world — but none of them, as far as I am aware, had evolved a creed. In the time of our Lord no profession was required from a proselyte; the High Priest was a Sadducee. In modern Judaism the Shema, 'Jehovah, our God, is one Jehovah,' has become a profession of faith, but this is probably due to Christian and Islamic influence.

The emergence of a creed in Christianity is significant; our religion involves faith, and faith in a person. 'What shall I do to be saved?' said the Philippian jailer. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' was the answer. Converts were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 'If thou shalt believe in thy heart and confess with thy mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, thou shalt be saved,' says St. Paul (*Rom.* x, 9). We may regret that the simple affirmations of the early disciples had to pass through the alembic and be distilled into metaphysical propositions when the faith of the Church was transmuted by the subtle influences of Greek philosophy, but it is idle to regret

the inevitable. From the third to the sixth century the keenest intellects wrestled with the task of defining the faith. The result of their stupendous labours was the dogmatic scheme of orthodox Christianity embodied in the Creeds. Admire it as we may, we cannot forget that centuries of Councils left the Church rent by schisms, and that a large part of the civilized world, wearied with the endless strife of tongues, threw aside Christianity with its elaborate theology and embraced the simple faith that there is one God, and Mahomet is His prophet.

After a thousand years of comparative quiescence the spirit of inquiry was loosed again at the Reformation. It was no longer, however, the nature of the Godhead that was at issue; it was, to put it very briefly, the nature and working of divine grace. Instead of creeds, confessions were drawn up, catechisms longer or shorter, and articles of belief. Once more the rage of controversy, which had set all Europe in the blaze of the Religious Wars, produced a reaction to Deism and Unitarianism, to the repudiation of all theology as an incumbrance to true spiritual religion, a repudiation which we find in such diverse thinkers as Rousseau and Matthew Arnold. By most, however, the old confessions of faith were not explicitly rejected, they remained like huge breakwaters around which the waves had once dashed, but from which the sea had now retired. It is worthy of remark that the last two centuries have seen the production of no great creed or confession; the Methodist movement produced none; the most successful religious movement of the present day (I mean, of course, the Oxford Groups) has no creed or statement of belief. It is significant that none of the proposed revisions of the Prayer Book touched the Thirty-Nine Articles. The Revised Prayer Books of 1927 and '28 legalized Reservation, but left untouched Article XXVIII, which lays it down that, 'The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.'

Now when we consider the tremendous intellectual changes that have come about in the course of the last century, changes compared to which the enlightenment of the Renaissance and Reformation period seems fitful and partial, the paralysis which has fallen on the Church as a living witness to the Christian consciousness must appear a very extraordinary fact. An old

friend of mine used to say to me, 'You young people don't know what orthodoxy is; I do: I've been orthodox.' And if this was true of my generation, how much more true must it be of the young people of to-day. In my country vicarage there is a parish library of theology belonging chiefly to the first half of the nineteenth century. I do not exaggerate when I say that the works of Biblical exegesis strike one positively dumb. I take down, for example, the commentary on the Bible by Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, a member of a distinguished family, and himself no mean scholar. I open it at random and light on such sentences as this:

> 'The history of the Flood, when it is read with the natural reason of Sarah, may provoke a smile; but the time may perhaps come, when natural reason may be ashamed of its laughter, as Sarah was, and may even be ready to say with her, "I laughed not" . . . The Flood was universal; why are we to marvel at this? So is its Antitype, the Sacrament of Baptism.'

To Wordsworth anyone who denies any statement in the Bible, however apparently trivial, commits a sin compared to which murder and adultery are excusable; he is, in fact, impugning the *bona fides* of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. We have travelled some distance since Wordsworth's commentary was published in 1872, yet deacons are still expected to answer in the affirmative the question, 'Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?'

Is there not, then, a clamant need to rewrite the creeds and the articles of our faith? Is not one of the declared objects of the Modern Churchmen's Union 'to proclaim Christ and His Gospel in the light of modern knowledge, endeavouring to give a clear meaning to all phrases which are open to ambiguous treatment'? The question from the Ordination Service which I have just quoted can be answered in the affirmative only if a non-natural sense is put upon the words. In the Revised Prayer Book the question is expanded, and the inevitable quotation from the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews is introduced. It would be far better if the question were assimilated to that in the Ordering of Priests, 'Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?' Some such alteration should certainly be made; it is not a question of bar-

gaining between different schools of thought; every educated man should be aware that the inerrancy of Scripture can no longer be sustained.

The following is the form of the declaration of assent required by the Statute 28 and 29 Victoria, c. 122, to be taken by every candidate for Holy Orders:

> 'I A.B. do solemnly make the following Declaration:—I assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. I believe the Doctrine of the Church of England, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God.'

There was in the eighteenth century an attempt made to abolish subscription to the Articles or to any confessional statement. Its history may be not without interest at the present time. It is often forgotten that the Church of England and the Nonconformist bodies passed through a phase of Modernism in the eighteenth century. I have spoken of the type of theology that dominated the English Church in the first half of the nineteenth century; but if we go further back and read Paley or Watson or Lardner, we find ourselves in a very different atmosphere. Across the gulf of Tractarian and Evangelical teaching, we clasp hands with men in some ways curiously like ourselves. Those old-time Modernists were called Latitudinarians, and under the first two Georges they exercised a great if not a dominating influence on the Church, and a still stronger one on the Nonconformist sects. A combination of causes into which it would take too long to enter swept them away; the Evangelical revival, which revived among other things the preaching of Hell fire and a crude bibliolatry, well nigh exterminated them, as a tribe of vigorous barbarians will sometimes exterminate a cultivated but unwarlike people. One wonders sometimes whether the same fate awaits us. But in the first years of George III they were strong among the higher ranks of the clergy and at the Whig University of Cambridge.

Many of the Latitudinarians adopted a very free and easy attitude toward the Articles, and indeed toward the Creeds. Gibbon in the last page of his History that he devotes to ecclesiastical affairs glances at the state of contemporary religion. 'Since the days of Luther and Calvin a secret reformation has been silently working in the bosom of the reformed churches.

The volumes of controversy are overspread with cobwebs: the doctrine of a Protestant church is far removed from the knowledge or belief of its private members; and the forms of orthodoxy, the articles of faith, are subscribed with a sigh, or a smile, by the modern clergy.' The great Dr. Clarke, whose published opinions on the Trinity were practically Arian, magnanimously refused a bishopric because this would have involved once more signing the Thirty-Nine Articles, but did not think it necessary to resign his living of St. James's, Wesminster. Conyers Middleton, who was probably less orthodox than Arius, in soliciting preferment from Lord Harvey, wrote: 'There are many things in the Church which I wholly dislike, yet whilst I am content to acquiesce in the ill, I should be glad to taste a little of the good, and to have some amends for that ugly assent and consent which no man of sense can approve of.' Hume advised a young clergyman who had serious doubts to remain in his profession. 'Civil employment for men of letters can scarcely be found . . . It is putting too great a respect on the vulgar and on their superstitions to pique oneself on sincerity with regard to them. Did ever one make it a point of honour to speak the truth to children or madmen?'

It is evident that subscription to creeds and articles could have no terrors for such pococuranti; they were like the old-time undergraduate who, when required to sign the Thirty-Nine Articles, generously offered to sign forty if they liked. But there were candid souls among the Latitudinarians who shrank from paltering with their conscience. In 1766 there appeared an anonymous work, afterwards acknowledged to be by Blackburne, Archdeacon of Cleveland, entitled, 'The Confessional: or A Full and Free Inquiry into the Right, Utility, Edification and Success of establishing systematical Confessions of Faith and Doctrine in Protestant Churches.' Blackburne's thesis is that the Reformation had established the right of private judgment and the sole authority of the Holy Scriptures: it was therefore a usurpation for any Church to enforce on its members, clerical or lay, assent to man-made creeds or articles.

The publication of 'The Confessional' was the occasion for much controversy. Boswell asked Johnson whether it was necessary to believe all the Thirty-Nine Articles. He replied, 'Why,

Sir, that is a question which has been much agitated. Some have held it necessary that they should all be believed; others have considered them to be only articles of peace, that is to say, you are not to preach against them.' In 1771 Blackburne, who had now come into the open and avowed his authorship of the 'Confessional,' called a meeting of his supporters at the Feathers Tavern in the Strand to draw up a petition to Parliament for the relief of the clergy from subscription to the Liturgy and Thirty-Nine Articles. The number of signatures obtained was rather disappointing; no bishop signed, not even Bishop Law of Carlisle, the most advanced Latitudinarian on the Bench, though his son, a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, did so. He became in due course an archdeacon. Boswell describes him as 'a man of great variety of knowledge, uncommon genius, and, I believe, sincere religion.' Another Fellow of Christ's College, William Paley, refused to sign. 'I cannot afford to have a conscience,' he said. However, he wrote an anonymous pamphlet in support of the petition in which he complains that 'two or three men, betwixt two or three centuries ago, fixed a multitude of obscure and dubious propositions, which many millions after must bring themselves to believe, before they be permitted to share in the provision which the state has made.' The debate in Parliament on the petition was the occasion of a speech by Burke, who seized upon its vulnerable point, the implication that the Bible was the only source of authority. 'What is that Scripture to which they are content to subscribe? They do not think that a book becomes of divine authority because it is bound in blue morocco and is printed by John Basket and his assigns? The Bible is a vast collection of different treatises. A man who holds the authority of one may consider another as merely human.' The petition was rejected by a large majority. Blackburne's son-in-law, Theophilus Lindsay, Vicar of Catterick, the next parish to mine in Yorkshire, hereupon resigned his living and became Minister of the first Unitarian congregation at Essex Street in London.

Where Blackburne's frontal attack failed, Newman's flank march succeeded; Tract XC showed that the Articles were patient of a Catholic interpretation; it was not long before they were found to be patient of a Broad Church interpretation too.

The Thirty-Nine Articles have at present somewhat the air of an abandoned battle-field. The forty stripes save one, as Hurrell Froude called them, no longer descend on the shoulders of innovators of any kind. The Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge is not embarrassed in his Pacificist campaign by Article XXXVII, which lays it down that 'it is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars.' Nor are our Socialist clergy deterred by Article XXXVIII, which affirms that 'the Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast.'

If another Blackburne were to arise and summon the spiritual heirs of the Latitudinarians to meet on the site of the vanished Feathers Tavern in the Strand, he would probably meet with a meagre response. But also, if he got his petition going, he would probably not experience any desperate resistance from the Fathers of our Church or Convocation; the Anglo-Catholics would hardly take arms on behalf of what is, after all, essentially a Protestant Confession. Modern Bishops do not rely on the Thirty-Nine Articles as a turnstile to keep out unorthodox candidates for Holy Orders; there are other ways of doing that. Every Diocesan Bishop has the full right to refuse to ordain any person whom he may think unfit for the sacred ministry; he is not bound to assign any reason, nor is there any legal remedy for such refusal. It is hard to see how it could be otherwise. In this matter we must trust the Bishops. It is worth pointing out, however, that if the reactionary party could pack the Bench of Bishops and control the theological colleges, they would be able without imposing any sort of test, or doing anything which would cause scandal, to cut off the supply of liberal candidates for Holy Orders.

It is around the Creeds that controversy at the moment rages. I may point out that the clergy are committed to them only in so far as belief in them is guaranteed by subscription to the Articles and assent to the Book of Common Prayer. But it is held by some that their use in the services prevents modern-minded men from coming to church. I wonder how much truth there is in this. In those rather inconclusive newspaper discus-

sions which serve to fill up the columns when things are slack in the political, social and sporting world, we find a certain number of people giving as a reason for their abstention from public worship the fact that the Church clings to an outworn theology. Usually, however, there are more letters complaining that the churches are empty because the clergy throw doubts on the truth of the Bible and do not preach the old Gospel of full salvation by the blood of Christ. There does seem to be a repugnance to the use of the Athanasian Creed, partly because of the metaphysical language in which it is drawn up, but principally because of the damnatory clauses. Unfortunately, there do not seem to be any figures as to the number of churches in which it is used; I imagine it is a declining number. As the Anglo-Catholics tend to make the Communion Service the principal service of the day, it is probably not heard by many even in those churches in which it is used. I am not aware that any bishop is making any serious attempt to enforce the rubric which prescribes it.

There are certain great advantages in having sharp, clear-cut statements of belief, like the axioms or propositions of Euclid, the slogan of the Moslems, 'There is one God, and Mahomet is His prophet,' or the massive dogmas of the American Declaration of Independence, 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.' A creed may be compared to the skeleton of an animal, not a very attractive thing in itself but holding together the living body. It is at least arguable that it was the possession of such a framework that enabled the Church to outlive its rivals in the conflict of religions that arose amid the decline of ancient civilization, just as it is, broadly speaking, the vertebrates that dominate the earth and not the invertebrates. But the framework must be flexible; a hardening of the tissues is one of the signs of approaching senility and death. Paley in his *Moral and Political Philosophy* says:

> 'For though some purposes of order and tranquillity may be answered by the establishment of creeds and confessions, yet they are at all times attended with serious inconveniences: they check inquiry; they violate liberty; they insnare the consciences of the clergy, by holding out temptations to prevarication . . . and by reason of the

changes which are wont to take place in the judgment of mankind upon religious subjects, they come at length to contradict the actual opinions of the Church, whose doctrines they profess to contain.'

Assuming that it is necessary to have some profession of faith, at any rate for those who exercise the teaching office in the Church, can we feel confident that the present time is ripe for drawing up a new creed? I confess that I am strongly inclined to answer this question in the negative. The tremendous impact of the new learning, historical and critical, scientific and psychological, has shaken the whole framework of our beliefs, and things have hardly even begun to settle down into their permanent forms. The tops of the mountains are seen after the deluge, but the earth is not yet ready for habitation. Fifty years ago a rough outline of the religion of the future seemed to be taking shape; the liberal Protestantism of such teachers as Harnack commanded the assent of most advanced thinkers. The ninth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, that mausoleum of Victorianism, is permeated by it; it seemed as if it was only a question of time before it became dominant in the non-Roman Churches. Then came Loisy and Schweitzer, and everything went back into the melting pot. To-day Newton and Darwin are being questioned. Pope wrote:

'Nature and Nature's laws lay all in night;
God said, "Let Newton be," and all was light.'

A more modern author has added the following couplet:

'It could not last; the Devil shouting, "Ho!
Let Einstein be," restored the status quo."

To build a stable creed in such days as ours is like erecting a temple on the slopes of a still active volcano. I hope I shall not be suspected of nebulosity on the one hand or obscurantism on the other. There is no virtue in the haziness which is scandalously reported of us:

The bland complaisance tempering bigot zeal,
Correcting 'I believe' to 'One does feel.'

On the other hand, we cannot believe the creeds in the sense in which they were believed in the fifth century A.D. It is improbable that those Greeks of the Lower Empire, as they used to be called, said the last word about the nature of the Godhead. I believe that invaluable preparatory work is being done, prin-

cipally by Modernists, toward the creation of a new theology. Considering the smallness of our numbers and the scantiness of our resources, it is wonderful what we of the Modern Churchmen's Union have achieved in the course of the last quarter of a century.

Lastly, before we talk about revising the creeds we ought to consider very seriously whether our movement is sufficiently powerful to provoke a contest in which we shall have to face obloquy and misrepresentation, and in which we may be overpowered. People who live in intellectual centres have little conception of the isolation that presses upon Modernists, clerical and lay, whose lot is cast in the more backward areas. Especially we Modernist clergy feel rather in the position of the host of Etruria when

> 'Those behind cried "Forward,"
> And those before cried "Back".'

We need a far stronger organization, a far more effective hold on the machinery of the Church, before we are in any position to make an advance.

To take one illustration of the weakness of the Modernist position as a practical force in Church politics; I am informed that the only members of our Union who sit in Convocation and the Church Assembly as representatives of the clergy are two or three Proctors who are also members of the Anglican Evangelical Group. Is there at present a single Archdeaconry where a Modernist, standing as a Modernist *sans phrase*, could hope for election as a member, clerical or lay, of the Church Assembly? If there is, I shall be glad to hear of its whereabouts. I could not but be struck lately by observing in the gallery of the Church Assembly during the debate on Church and State a member of our Union who has made that subject peculiarly his own. He should have been in the body of the hall. So should other prominent members of our Union. Obviously we or our spiritual descendants ought to play a part, an important part, in formulating anew the faith of the Church. But we cannot do this until our position has been consolidated, until we have the support of that great mass of laymen who, while essentially Christian, have lost touch with organized religion and therefore do not count in the councils of the Church.

HOW TO BELIEVE

By H. D. A. Major, D.D., F.S.A., Vicar of Merton and Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford.

OUR Conference has been mainly concerned with what to believe about various Christian doctrines. Possibly some who have listened may feel that traditional Christian dogma as presented by Modernist teachers means a 'reduced Christianity.' They may even feel that as a result of listening to such teaching they are, as it is called, 'losing their faith.' When I was a young man and attended Dr. Driver's Old Testament lectures here in Oxford, I knew a number of young men — future clergymen — who gave up attending Driver because they said they were 'losing their faith.' By which they meant that a number of their traditional beliefs were becoming incredible. It seemed to them that as a result of Driver's Old Testament criticism the range of Christian truth was being very seriously reduced, and even the whole Christian religion was being proved to be untrue. As a consequence, they would not only have to give up the idea of being clergymen, but even to give up membership in the Christian Church. This kind of situation is common enough to-day, but it is being produced, not primarily by the new truth which the modern-minded Christian teacher is presenting in his teaching, but by a certain muddle-headedness in his pupil.

Jesus was a great teacher of moral and spiritual truth. In His parable of the Sower, He, like the Jewish Rabbis, divided His pupils into four classes. The whole purpose of that parable is to stress the responsibility of the hearer of moral and spiritual truth. The hearer is very apt in this matter to stress the responsibility of the teacher for the result which follows: but Jesus stresses the responsibility of the hearer. Whilst Jesus was uttering the parable we are told that He cried out constantly: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And Mark (iv, 24) adds that He also said to his auditors: Take heed *what* ye hear. But Luke (viii, 18) renders this saying: Take heed *how* ye hear. In the Semitic tongue in which Jesus taught the same word is used to express either what or how, and Luke is no doubt right here in

rendering it how. *How* we hear is hardly less important than *what* we hear.

There are a great number of problems connected with man's relation to truth — the different kinds of truth and the different ways by which we acquire a knowledge of these different kinds of truth. It is true that all truth is one, but it is necessary to realize that all truth is not of the same kind. There is physical truth, mathematical truth, historical truth, aesthetic truth, moral truth, spiritual truth.

Then again there are problems connected with credulity, belief, faith, and the differences between them. Some of these have been dealt with in our papers and discussions. It is my intention to stress certain practical issues in connection with them, which may be little more than a crossing of the T's and a dotting of the I's of what has been already said. My first point is this, and it is one which is made by Professor Julian Huxley in his preliminary statement to his widely-read book, *Religion without Revelation*. He there writes :

> 'Our beliefs about belief are among the most important that we may possess, and this all the more since we rarely stop to give their existence thought.'

What we believe occupies the foreground in most minds. Why we believe it is often quite subordinate : How we believe it or how we ought to believe it receives even less consideration. Yet, as rational, moral and spiritual beings we are deeply concerned with the why and the how. We believe some things as the result of our sense perceptions : others as the result of logical demonstration : others as the result of scientific experiment : others as the result of practical experience : others because they have come down to us in the form of a sacred tradition : others because they are demanded by authority : others because we like to believe them, the belief provides consolation and optimistic outlook, and moral stimulus : others because they come to us in the form of intuition, inspiration 'guidance' : others because they are axiomatic truths and appear to us neither to need nor to be capable of demonstration : others because most of the people with whom we live seem to believe them.

It is possible that each of these reasons for believing certain things is in certain circumstances thoroughly sound, but in other

circumstances thoroughly unsound. The apostolic exhortation: 'Prove all things,' is no easy matter in the sphere of belief, seeing how many things there are to be proved and how many different ways there are of proving them. What becomes clear on reflection is that in many cases our reasons for belief are not only manifold but also mixed. We do not usually believe a single thing for a single reason, but for many reasons. Hence it is clear that there is not only one, but many problems of belief and that they are very intricate.

I am only concerned here with religious beliefs — more specifically, Christian beliefs. These Christian beliefs are of a very mixed kind. Some are concerned with natural science, some with literary criticism, some with historical truth, some with moral standards, some with metaphysical ideas, some with spiritual experience.

Now, one very important point in which the modern Christian is compelled to differ from the ancient Christian is that truths of the physical sciences, if they are to be included among Christian beliefs, may and must be held to be true only because they have been proved to be true at the bar of science. This applies also to truths of literary criticism — all questions concerning the date, place, authorship, character, etc., of Biblical literature. These truths may only be believed if proved true at the bar of literary criticism. The same applies to Christian historical truths such as the Virgin Birth, the Physical Resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day, the Ascension on the fortieth day after the Resurrection, and so on. They can only be rightly held to be true if proved to be so by scientific historic research.

Here we know that Christian tradition is in acute conflict on many points with modern scientific conclusions. The Modernist Christian is differentiated from the Tradionalist Christian by being compelled to side here with the scientists. He does not feel that in so doing he is disloyal to the Christian religion although repeatedly accused of being so. He holds that one of the essential loyalties of the Christian life is loyalty to truth — lower and higher — in all its forms: a loyalty enshrined in the famous sentence of Tertullian:

> 'Christ called Himself the Truth: He did not call Himself Tradition.'

On the other hand, it is clear that there are a great number of practical situations in which if we are to act only on the basis of scientifically proved truth we shall never act at all, and yet our situation is such that it is absolutely necessary for us to act. In such a situation must we become the slaves of credulity and act in accordance with positively incredible and irrational assumptions dictated to us by obscurantist authority, inherited tradition or the overwhelming impulses of our emotional nature?

Harnack described Barthianism as 'a desperado religion.' Does our only hope of Christian salvation lie in our becoming desperadoes and submitting to the tyranny of irrationalism?

There are many religious people to-day who appear to be adopting this counsel of despair. We may be sure that there must be a terrible reaction from it since there is a very large element of rationality in human nature which refuses in the end either to be crushed or to be terrorized. Credulity then which believes in contradiction to the evidence, or without any evidence whatsoever, is not a Christian virtue. St. Paul's 'Prove all things' presents the right Christian attitude. There must be some proof for every Christian belief, but the question is here: What kind of proof for those Christian beliefs which cannot be proved scientifically?

We have said that in many situations we are compelled to act without the support of scientific proof. When this scientific proof is not forthcoming and when our situation compels us to act and we are forbidden to act in a spirit of blind credulity, what is the kind of justification for action which we must secure? It will be seen that such a situation involves a balancing of probabilities.

'Probability,' said Bishop Butler, 'is the very guide of life.' We have got to weigh such evidence as we can secure for and against any proposed line of practical activity and then adopt that line of action for which there appears to be the most evidence. Of course this is often done in the field of scientific research. The scientist adopts what he calls a working hypothesis. This becomes his master thought in his investigation and he observes narrowly whether the fresh results which his research brings to light are for or against it. If the results are against it he is led to modify his working hypothesis so as to bring it into

harmony with the new results. If the new results flatly contradict the working hypothesis, then he abandons it and formulates another working hypothesis. This, the great Professor Huxley complained, was one of the recurring tragedies of the scientist's life, that every day a beautiful hypotheses was slain by an ugly fact. The scientist requires, it will be noted, a working hypothesis in order to direct his research. In the religious sphere we have to adopt a similar method : we have to make the great truths of the Christian religion our working hypothesis and to observe as we test them by living in obedience to them whether the result supports them or not. The Christian motto ought to be *solvitur ambulando*, *operando*, *orando*, for, as Dr. Illingworth has said, 'The Christian religion refuses to be proved first and practised afterwards : its practice and its proof go hand in hand.' This is not to villify reason which, as Bishop Butler declared, is 'The candle of the Lord within us,' but to transcend reason. That which enables us to do this is called Faith — a very much mis-used term and sometimes erroneously identified with credulity and sometimes erroneously identified with belief.

Faith differs widely from credulity, since credulity is belief which has no foundation in reason and is utterly opposed to it : whereas faith uses reason as far as reason can be used and though it transcends reason never contradicts nor flouts it. This is emphatically stated by one of the great Cambridge Platonists : 'I do not oppose rational to spiritual, for spiritual is most truly rational.' So it is no contradiction in terms to speak of a reasonable faith, but it would be a contradiction in terms to speak of a reasonable credulity, for credulity is irrational. The credulous man believes in accordance with his passions, prejudices, fancies, or in accordance with the dictates of an authority which he neither examines nor questions.

Faith differs also from belief. Faith is a much larger thing than belief. Faith may and does create beliefs, convictions, that such and such things are true. But on the other hand, Faith may be hostile to beliefs and extinguish them. I can imagine the case of a man holding a multitude of beliefs and yet not possessed of faith, and I think there might be a case of a man full of faith with no beliefs at all and who would feel compelled when asked whether he believed this or that proposition to reply,

'I do not: I feel no certitude in these matters: it may be so or it may not be so.' Where he shews his faith is not in his beliefs but by his resolution to select his working hypotheses in the religious sphere and in his resolution to put them to the test in practice and to be loyal to them when he has many temptations to be otherwise. Dr. Inge, whose book *Faith and its Psychology* is the most precious and illuminating of any treatise I have studied on this subject, writes:

> 'The essence of Christian faith is the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis.'

Christian Faith possesses a number of hypotheses: the basic one being that the Universe has a personal or supra-personal Creator and that He is essentially rational, moral and spiritual: that men share the Divine Nature of this Being and may enter into personal relations with Him: that in Jesus Christ we have the Supreme unveiling, under human limitations, of this Divine Nature.

Now, it is the way in which we treat these hypotheses in our everyday life which indicates whether we are possessed of Christian Faith. The two outstanding characteristics of this Christian faith, which is essentially rational, moral and spiritual are that it is personal and practical. It is personal in a double sense. It is projected towards a person and seeks relations with a person. It is not concerned primarily with propositions. This is the really strong feature of our Catholic creeds that they put in the forefront of their affirmations this personal faith: I believe in God, I believe in Jesus Christ, I believe in the Holy Spirit. The Christian attitude to the Supreme Being in His threefold unveiling of Himself to mankind is one of trust.

The other aspect in which Christian Faith is seen to be personal is that it demands the whole personality of the Christian. If it is needful, according to the perfection of the divine command, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, with all our strength — in short, with all the powers of our whole personality — it is none the less needful to have faith in God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. The intellectual element is included in this faith, but it is only one of its many-sided, personal activities.

This Faith is, and should be, always producing fruits: what St. Paul called, the Fruits of the Spirit — love, joy, peace, righteousness, patience, courage, holiness. Jesus Christ would seem to have provided only one test in this matter: 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' The writer of the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews presents Faith as a most heroic spirit; full of courage, initiative, adventure, the will to do, to dare, to suffer, to persevere when others faint and fall. It has inspired men not only to seek the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God, but also has enabled them to subdue kingdoms, work righteousness, stop the mouths of lions, out of weakness to be made strong, wax valiant in fight, turn to flight the armies of the aliens. This aspect of Faith is nobly expressed in the well-known lines of A. H. Clough:

> Say not, 'The struggle nought availeth,
> The labour and the wounds are vain,
> The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
> And as things have been they remain.'
>
> If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars:
> It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
> Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
> And, but for you, possess the field.'

It is one of the great misfortunes of the Christian Church, the reasons for which I cannot recount here, that Christian Faith has not only been reduced to certitude of belief which can shew itself most effectively by assenting to the propositions of a creed, but that the Christian Faith itself has actually been identified with the formularies themselves. In consequence the injunction in the Epistle of St. Jude to 'contend earnestly for the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints' has come to be identified with contending for the retention of various traditional formularies which include a number of Christian beliefs of very varying degrees of credibility and incredibility.

We show our faith primarily by our life, and as we live that life rightly we do secure, if we are to judge by the testimony of the Christian consciousness, a growing conviction of the truth of the great Christian hypothesis which we have made both the guide and inspiration of our life, what Browning has called 'reasons and reasons.'

May we not hope as Modernists that the day will yet dawn when the Church authorities will demand no more and no less from those who seek her fellowship than that they shall affirm their Christian Faith by stating their unflinching resolution to make the great moral and spiritual ideals of the Christian life the working hypothesis of their own personal endeavour?

In that case we should not have an army of fanatical obscurantists led by materialistic sceptics, which is the great danger ahead of the Church to-day, but an influential fellowship of men and women united in their loyalty to a supreme moral and spiritual ideal and in their resolution to realize it for the welfare of mankind.

APPENDIX

CONTAINING THREE COMMENTS

WE think our readers will value the three following opening speeches: the first delivered by the Rev. Norman Pittenger (on the staff of the General Theological Seminary, New York) after the reading of Mr. Webb's and Mr. Richardson's papers: the second delivered by the Rev. Douglas Richardson after the reading of Mr. Roy McKay's paper: the third delivered by the Rev. H. J. Trueman after the reading of Dean Inge's paper.

1. SPEECH OF THE REV. NORMAN PITTENGER.

The paper which we heard from Mr. Webb seemed to me most interesting, especially as being significant of the modern trend in the field of New Testament criticism. His statements regarding the distinction between 'bare fact' and 'circumstantial evidence,' and his emphasis upon the latter as our principal testimony to the historic Jesus and the impact of His personality upon the world, were most impressive. His criticism of the charge of 'subjectivity' in interpretation of our Lord's life and work was conclusive. I should like especially to underline these several points, because misunderstanding about them has led on the one hand to an unwillingness to use the so-called 'form-critical' method, and on the other hand to an extreme and almost sceptical cult of the Christ of faith detached from any historical foundation whatsoever.

Recent study has made abundantly clear the great part which the Christian community has played in bringing to us the earliest traditions about Jesus; and as one who belongs to the Catholic wing of the Modernist Movement (or, if you will, the Modernist wing of the Catholic Movement) I must say honestly that I regard this as sheer gain. But I think that Catholics should be warned against pressing this unquestioned and important fact in the direction just indicated—towards the establishment of a mystery-cult which does not possess the one great thing that in the first days of Christianity did as a matter of fact distinguish the Church from the other mystery cults: that is 'historical happenedness' (to use a phrase of von Hügel) which the creeds stress by the words 'under Pontius Pilate.'

Whatever be the relation of history to faith, it seems to me the very essence of the Christian faith that *something did happen,* which by the law of sufficient reason was adequate to create the stupendous impression upon men which the writings of the New Testament record. Exact knowledge of 'the biographical Jesus' we may not have; but at any rate we must have, and Mr. Webb has shown that we do have, enough to say with Mr. Richardson in his remarkably stimulating paper, 'The disciples had no difficulty in believing that Jesus stood in a unique relationship to God because the unusualness of their resurrection experience of Him was congruous with the unusualness of their experience of His life and teaching.'

Mr. Richardson, also, accepted the form-critical method. His results were on the whole similar to those of Mr. Webb. I hope that along such lines English scholars will be able to show that the use of these new methods does not necessarily (indeed cannot legitimately) lead to the negative, irrational, and even dualistic conclusions to which some writers seem to point. Such conclusions are utterly unable to account for the fact of Christianity as a living, developing, fruitful religion.

I entirely agree with Mr. Webb and Mr. Richardson about the Fourth Gospel. While it does contain some historical material of real value (as for example the date of the Last Supper, and some of the material about our Lord's trial), it is on the whole quite uninterested in history as such, or perhaps one might better say in 'bare fact' (to use Mr. Webb's convenient phrase). It is interpretation in the light of faith.

Perhaps one may suggest that there is in the Second Gospel a remarkable wealth of Pauline theology, which may be indicated by the very word 'gospel,' a Pauline term almost distinctively: 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God'—that is, 'the origin in Jesus' own teaching of that kind of preaching about salvation through faith in Messiah Jesus as God's Son, which was given by Paul and his followers.' Mr. Webb did not notice this, I think, nor did he observe that *Matthew* is very largely a Judaizing gospel: the Gentile Christians are welcome, and Gentiles are to be converted, but in the Kingdom it is the Jewish Christians, who keep the 'least commandments' as well as the 'great,' who will sit on the thrones! There was some real value, I think, in the old German theory of a conflict between two types of theology as a prominent factor in the gospel writing.

We may be thankful to Mr. Richardson for closing on the note of redemption. Soteriology, broadly understood, not as rescuing sinners from the hands of an angry God but as the bringing in of a 'divine fire' (as Dr. Burkitt used to say) and quality of spiritual life, is the only adequate basis for Christology. I myself think that the special significance of Christ is found more in this total achievement than in any specific consciousness which He may have possessed and which we may trace in the tradition. It is at this point that the witness of the Church, not its 'infallibility' but its free *consensus fidelium,* is a real aid in the development of Christian doctrine.

Mr. Richardson suggested a Christological statement in the latter part of his paper. May I sketch such a statement, following along the lines which he laid down, and building on the view of the historical basis for our faith which Mr. Webb has indicated to us?

The heart of the Christian faith, we are often told, is the doctrine of the Incarnation. This, it seems to me, is not strictly true. The heart of the Christian faith is the living awareness of the reality of God's presence, activity and love, as apprehended through Jesus Christ. In Alice Meynell's words, it is because of

> The message to the maid, the human birth,
> The lesson, and the Young Man crucified

that we know

> The terrible, shamefast, frightened, whispered, sweet,
> Heart-shattering secret of God's way with us.

From that reality, theologians have quite properly arrived at the doctrine of the Incarnation as an explanation—to my mind, the only adequate explanation—of Christ, His work and His person.

But how shall we understand the Incarnation? As a catastrophic intrusion, an unprecendented wonder, or as a fact which is in line with the ceaseless operation in the world of the Divine Being? With Mr. Richardson, I should say that it is only by seeing the Incarnation as set in the context of an incarnational universe that we shall properly interpret it — although we must hold fast the truth that we see the universe as incarnational largely because Christ is congruous with it and expressive of its real nature. It is always from our knowledge of God in Christ that we must proceed; but having said this, may we not legitimately go on to say that our Lord's person and the order from which He appeared may be used to throw light one on the other? That at any rate seems to me the way in which Anglican theology (classically in *Lux Mundi*) has conducted its study.

Here we shall find help in the Logos doctrine. Suggestive discussions have been published recently in this field by Dr. Bethune-Baker, by the Dean of St. Paul's (in his notable essay called 'The Doctrine of Christ,' appearing in a symposium entitled *The Future of Christianity*), and Dr. Major (in a recent *Modern Churchman*). I am still old-fashioned enough to believe that our human reason can properly be employed on this subject, and to regard the Barthian denial of such use of reason as our latest heresy.

Following along these lines, we may believe that the Word of God or Deity, in an outgoing, self-expressive, self-revealing aspect or mode of being (an eternal reality in the Divine Nature, as the doctrine of the Trinity insists, and really divine in the full sense of that term) is operative in every nook and corner, on every level, of the whole creative evolutionary process. We may go on to assert that that Word of God is more especially active in man, as the hidden ground of his being, the root of his rational, spiritual and moral nature, the thing that makes him fully man. And in the light of the impact of Christ upon men, His influence and power, His abiding fertility, we may interpret the Man of Nazareth (in the whole content of His life, teaching, death, and continued presence and power) as the definitive appearance, the full emergence in history of that Eternal Word of God. Here is the supremely characteristic and uniquely effectual self-disclosure and activity of God to man, in man, and as man, with all the limitations that that may have involved; but with its stupendous result, the knowledge of God and the reception of His life, as love of *that* quality. Finally, we may be convinced that as men share in the Spirit of Christ, whether or not they know Him under that name, they are made in a more intensive way participants in the incarnating work of God, whose end is the bringing of the entire human family to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

To avoid a misunderstanding at this point, I should like to say that such a view does not make our Lord merely the 'finest flower of humanity,' and so interpret Him along solely 'immanental' lines. Because it sees the entire creative process as incarnational, it cannot be content at any place (and above all with Christ) with an interpretation 'from below.' Rather, following von Hügel, it sees the whole world as entered by, penetrated by, acted upon by, the Divine Reality; and it sees our Lord as the point, so to say, where that action is concentrated and intensified in a supreme, definitive and specially effectual manner. Nor is humanity identified with Deity, even in Christ Himself. Human nature is indeed penetrated by the divine, grounded in the divine, used by the divine. It is in Christ that human nature, at its highest and best (and having reached this highest and best through 'prevenient action' of God during the whole course of history), is the adequate instrument and *organon* for God in His work among men.

We are made in God's image, indeed; but in us that image is blurred, broken and frustrated by our sin and weakness. Christ is the completed, the true, Image of God in man—truly human, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, but also (because of His power to conform us to His likeness) recognized by our enlightened faith as truly divine.

NORMAN PITTENGER.

II. SPEECH OF THE REV. DOUGLAS RICHARDSON.

Mr. McKay has spoken finely of the central experience of Christianity. What he has said has been penetrating and it has not reflected an undue sense of strain. There are three practical points which I should like to develop:

1. *How do we get this great experience of which he has spoken?*

Sometimes people tell us that they long for the renovating experience which they associate with Christianity, but cannot get it. How shall we answer them? If we look into our own experience, I think we shall find that it is no use just urging people to repent. Clergy often urge their people to repent, to be reverent, etc., but these words seldom mean anything to them, and they don't know how to make them mean anything. Often they try to feel sinful, and it either leaves them cold or has the effect of arousing quite disproportionate grief for surface sins — as when they admit having been short-tempered, without having realised that their annoyance was symptomatic of something deeper, a fundamental vanity or self-love which has been unwittingly wounded.

Now the only way to find the true and cleansing repentance is to face our characters squarely and try to realise what they are from a growing knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. Repentance is spoken of, quite truly, as a change of mind. It comes from regular serious thought about God and His nature, particularly as this arises out of Christ's whole life and purpose and teaching. Even the Cross, by itself, is not enough. One must know why Jesus went to it, the principles which governed His choice. If we think about and study these things, then we come to know ourselves properly. Then we can truly repent, not 'accept' ourselves (as Mr. McKay quoted Mr. Bertrand Russell to have said). Unless we proceed on these lines, one of two things may happen to us: (*a*) the idea of repentance will become more and more unreal until, perhaps, we give up religion altogether, or (*b*) we experience a sudden conversion, when a great joy or sorrow comes into our lives, or some other religious person, perhaps unbalanced, exercises a mastery over us.

2. *The immediate conduct of those who feel their sinfulness deeply.*

Some are driven to punish themselves—to be ascetics. Others may feel themselves impelled to make some overflowing act of restitution or extravagant generosity. All such cases have something very touching about them, but they need to be submitted to calm reflection. If people feel moved by the Holy Spirit to acts which may seem to us as Christians extravagantly absurd, we should remind them that the Holy Spirit is also a Spirit of wisdom.

3. *How can my sin, actually committed, be done with?*

I may feel sure that I am forgiven by God, but the past is the past and cannot be changed. When I think of it I am sad; and surely shall be through all eternity.

Now I do not think so. The value of the past at least can be changed. There comes a time when we look back and see only the good that has come of it. And this will be more so in another world when the other person (if there was one) is also reconciled to God. When this happens the value of our sinful act is completely changed; just as after an illness we remember no more the pain but only the goodness and kindness which were shewn to us, and perchance the blessing which that discipline has brought to our own souls.

R. D. RICHARDSON.

SPEECH OF THE REV. H. J. TRUEMAN.

From Dr. Inge's great pronouncement on Prayer we have at least gathered that it is a confidence generously offered us by one to whom prayer is very definitely 'the elevation of the mind to God,' and the precious fruit of that for many of us is the valued teaching which that uplifted mind has offered us in illuminating and inspiring writings. My humbler task must be to help you to a gradual descent from the Alpine heights of such spiritual confidences by offering you a few simple reflections of a very ordinary person in the valleys to whom prayer seems, as Dr. Inge expressed it, 'the very breathing of religion,' and yet to whom the conventional saying of prayers has seemed to become less and less real.

We have heard of the old man who all through his life used his childhood's prayer:

> 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
> Look on me, a little child;
> Pity my simplicity, . . .'

Such 'simplicity' no doubt implied a very touching trust, but not such development of mind and character as would suggest a growth in the knowledge of God or an enlargement of the inner life.

And I want to suggest that a *habit* of prayer — so different from the *saying* of prayers even at the most well-advised regular seasons — is, like all good habits, a matter of careful practice, and no one is to be discouraged if such contented resting on God as Dr. Inge has pointed to seems very far away. Is it any encouragement to any other pilgrim on the long journey to be told that for one at least the consolation and uplift from formal saying of prayers, whether privately or with the company of the faithful, has a diminishing power? But because we no longer wish to pray about the weather, and hardly dare to pray for release from pain, we need, I suggest, be in no way discouraged from thinking we can still be praying men and women.

We have been pointed to the 'silent yearning of the soul' and to 'duties performed sacramentally,' and some of us, surely, can add the supreme satisfaction of the soul-stirring discovery of Beauty and what is at its heart, and the revelation of wonder in the eyes of a child or animal; and if the mind has been in truth elevated to God, these things may assure us of the touch of divinity, of the all-satisfying friendship and trustworthiness of God.

Are any of you tempted to deny the name of prayer to such communion? I am sure there are many who feel the need of very definite prayer-making and congregational worship, but I can believe, too, there is something for us to learn from the Eastern assurance that a man should worship formally till his maturity, but should be able to leave all that behind at last, and be at one with God with no need of the mediation of words or acts of formal devotion. And isn't that just how we come into closest communion with those whose hearts are as our hearts?

Only I want to say, with entire simplicity, it is well not to be afraid to say to God, 'I do so want it!' even if it is as simple a thing as a fine day for a picnic, or a child's passion for a new doll at Christmas; and I suggest that if you have been able to walk on the heights to which Dr. Inge has pointed, your touch with God will be so real and actual and fearless and child-like that the smallest and most fugitive desire will inevitably be a breathing out of your heart's longing to your heart's dearest Friend. Do we ever stop to think that, as any faithful friend would do, God may be expecting confidences from us, and that we should even aim at something like the small-talk of conversation between us and the well-beloved Heavenly Father?

And is not the old familiar hymn-verse an entirely satisfying account of what the deepest and the most ordinary prayer really is?

'Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.'

May I put it all briefly like this? The first lisping approach to God may well be *saying prayers*: 'God bless father and mother and make me a good child' (though perhaps, with Augustine, 'not yet'); and we may go on to learn to leave things to God and not ask, and, further, we may begin to take God naturally with us in 'every day's most quiet need.' But surely when at last we come to know and rest in God, all the barriers will be down, and if we even wish we had a thing we shall confide in our dear Divine Friend; only it will not be so much asking as allowing Him to share our heart's inmost longings and simplest aspirations.

And I think that is Prayer.

H. J. TRUEMAN.

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